

RĀMĀYANA AND LANKA

RĀMĀYANA AND LANKA

PARTS I & II

BY

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THE LATE JUSTICE SIR T. SADASIVA AIYAR, M.L.
TO WHOM THIS WORK IS DEDICATED

TO
THE LATE JUSTICE
SIR T. SADASIVA AIYAR, M.L.
MY ELDER BROTHER
WHO LOVED ME & WHOM I LOVED
THIS WORK IS DEDICATED

OPINION

SIR P. S. SIVASWAMY AIYER, K.C.S.I., writes :
‘ I found the notes of your research into the
geography of Lanka and Râma’s route thereto,
entrancing. I admire the patient research and
the critical spirit you have brought to bear
upon your investigation. Your arguments are
prima facie sound. At any rate they challenge
impartial examination.’

PREFACE

I WAS familiar with the *Bāla* and the *Sundara Kāṇḍas* of the *Rāmāyaṇa* since my student days. The *Bāla Kāṇḍa* impressed me as puerile Purāṇic stuff, and the *Sundara* as mainly, florid, overwrought, descriptive poetry, though in parts exceedingly fine and sweet-sounding. In 1922, when convalescing from a serious illness, I went through the *Rāmāyaṇa* from end to end and it struck me that the *Ayodhya*, *Āraṇya* and *Kishkindhā Kāṇḍas* might contain genuine historical matter, and that these *Kāṇḍas* deserved a critical study in view to ascertain if Vālmiki's epic had a historic substratum. In a verse of the *Ayodhya*, I read that Daśaratha looked like the 'Sun eclipsed and a *R̥shi* who had spoken an untruth' (Sarga 8, verse 16). It struck me that Vālmiki's loyalty to truth, might, to begin with, be tested with reference to his geography. I sent for Survey of India Standard Sheet 63, and found that Vālmiki's Tamasā, Vedaśrutī, Gōmati, Syandika, and Śringaverapura on the north bank of the Ganges, corresponded to the Tons, Biswi, Gumti, Sai, and Singraur of the Map. This raised a strong presumption that Vālmiki's itinerary of Rāma, beyond Singraur, and right

up to Lanka, might be equally reliable. I therefore first concentrated on Vālmīki's geography and Appendices I, Ia and II, to Section I of this work, contain the results of my search. In the course of about two years of relevant reading, I made out to my own satisfaction, that the *Rāmāyaṇa* was in substance a credible record of the struggle of Āryan and Gond for Janasthān, the populous, fertile, black-soil, high level plain of the Damoh District, 800 square miles in extent, and watered by the lower reaches of the Sonar river and of its tributaries, the Kopra to the right, and the Bewas to the left. By 1926, I was able to convince my learned and saintly brother, the late Justice Sadasiva Aiyar of the Madras High Court, that my geography was right, as also my conclusions as to the historic kernel of the epic. He was deeply interested in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, having read it about fifteen times from end to end by way of ' *Pārāyaṇa* ' in the course of thirty-five years. He made up his mind to resign his Presidency of the Religious Endowments Board by the end of 1926, and to join me at Bangalore for a prolonged stay in view to writing out his ' lengthy judgment ', as he called it, on his brother's ' startling conclusions based on the unimpeachable evidence of text and topo-maps '. But that, alas ! was

not to be. Pressed by the Minister in charge of Endowments for whom he had a special regard, he continued in harness, till he passed away in November 1927. He was a selfless, fearless, forthright worker devoted to God and Truth, and was the first practical pioneer of Harijan uplift to which he gave, during two decades and more, an appreciable portion of his income. In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the great Agastya has a brother, called 'Agastya-bhrāta' without a name of his own, and I often felt that, like the latter, I should be content and proud to be known merely as 'Sadāsiva-bhrāta'. When he died, and the shadow of *Kālī* thickened over India in 1928, I put aside for the time all thoughts of Śrī Rāma and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. But in June 1934, six years later, I read in the *Hindu* that our illustrious poet-singer, Dr. Tagore, informed a Madras audience: 'I told the Ceylonese, that Sītā, queen of Ayodhya, was abducted and kept confined in their island by a ten-headed giant.' I have no idea why this most angelic of men said so, but it both shocked and saddened me. In Sanskrit literature post-Christian as well as pre-Christian, right down to the *Champu Rāmāyaṇa* of King Bhoja (1010-1050 A.D.), Ceylon or Simhaḷa was never mixed up with Rāvana's Lanka on the Trikūta hill. From

the days of Guṇāḍhya and the Śātavāhanas, Simhaḷa was a *civilised* Buddhist kingdom famous for its precious stones. In 330 A.D. the Simhaḷa king Meghavarman sent an embassy to Emperor Samudra Gupta with costly gifts. Early in the fifth century A.D., the great Fahien reached Ceylon fourteen days after leaving Tamluk, *transcribed the Sacred Books* unknown in China, and witnessed the festival of the Exhibition of Buddha's Tooth. In the *Ratnāvalī* of King Śrī Harsha (608-48), Simhaḷa occurs half a dozen times, a trader comes from the Simhaḷas, Vikramabāhu is the high-born (*udātta-vamṣa-prabhava*) king of the Simhaḷas, and Ratnāvalī with her rare necklace of wondrous sheen, 'was *Simhaḷesa Duhita*'. The word Lanka does not appear even once, though Harsha was familiar with the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and refers in verse 31, Anka II, to Meghanāda's temporary triumph over Lakshmaṇa and the Vānara hosts.

For the first and only time in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Ceylon is indicated in Sarga 41, *Kishkindha*, as 'the abode of wicked Rāvaṇa, glorious as Indra'. It is not named, but is described as an island opposite the Mahendra mountain which Agastya had fixed in the sea where the Tāmbraparnī enters it near Pāṇḍya-kavāta or Kolkai. I have dealt with this

interpolation in detail in Chapters I and XI of this work. As Hanumān and Rāma started from Mahendra for Lanka, the forger-flatterer's motive was obviously to glorify an Indian king who invaded Ceylon from Kolkai Harbour, defeated the Simhalese king and captured his Capital Anurādhapura. As a rule, in our *kāvya*s, the victorious hero and his helpers are deified, while his vanquished enemies are diabolized. In the '*Māgha*' of the latter half of the seventh century A.D., Nārada makes out that Śiṣupāla was a reincarnation of Rāvaṇa, as Kṛṣṇa was of Rāma (Sarga I, verses 65 and 66). This deifying and diabolizing has been introduced, even in an ancient *Itihāsa* like the '*Bhārata*' (*vide Vana Parva*, Ghoshayātra, Sarga 253), and the Asuras informed Duryodhana that *he* was their protagonist, that his helper Karṇa was Narakāsura reincarnate, while the Pāṇḍavas (Karṇa's brothers) were helpers of the Gods! (verses 20 and 25).

There is good reason to believe that Ceylon was faked into Lanka in the eleventh century A.D. In the latter half of the tenth century the Chōlas rose to be a great military and naval power. About 1000 A.D., Rājarāja subdued the Pāṇḍya, Chera, Pallava, Gaṅga, Eastern Chālūkyā and Kaṭiṅga kingdoms. His son Rājendra extended his conquests to Kedah and

Perak in Malaya, 1,200 miles across the sea from Trincomalee. From the middle of the tenth century, Ceylon fell upon evil times. The *Imperial Gazetteer* says: "Parāntaka II (962-70) sent an expedition to demand from Udaya II, the Pāṇḍya Crown and Insignia in his possession. The Tamils invaded Ceylon, beat the Ceylonese, and captured the Crown. By 999 Rājarāja overcame the Pāṇḍyas of Madura. In 1002 he conquered Ceylon." The '*Mahāwaṇṣo*' says: "the Tamils greatly oppressed the islanders, Anurādhapura was sacked, the holy places desecrated, and king Mihindo and his queen captured by the Chōlas. After this there was constant war between the Tamils and the Simhaḷese for a century and a half, till great Parākramabāhu (1164-97) restored, though only temporarily, Simhaḷese independence."

The Chōlas claimed Solar descent, and it is likely that it was during the two centuries of Chōla dominance in Ceylon the Simhaḷa king and his army were made out to be Rāvaṇa and his Rākshasa hosts. It would seem that in the Tamil inscriptions of Rājarāja and Rājendra, Ceylon is called 'Ilā' (*vide* Rice's *Gazetteer*, Vol. I, p. 334). If 'Ilā' is short for Ilangai or Lanka, that would suggest that verses 17-25 of Sarga 41 of *Kishkindha* were

interpolated during the sway of Rājārāja or Imperial Rājendra whose dominions extended to Malaya beyond the seas. The great Tamil poet Kambar flourished in the second half of the twelfth century. In the 'Naḍavaṭṭa Paḍalam' of his *Kitkinda Kāṇḍa*, Sugrīva, describing the way to Rāvaṇa's 'great city', refers in succession to the 'South Tamil Country', Agastya Malai, Tāmbraparnī river, Mahendragiri and the sea (*Kaḍal*). He then ends, 'Cross the sea, search thoroughly and return to this place within the month's time fixed' (verses 31 and 32). These verses show that Sarga 41, verses 17-25, of the original *Kishkindha*, were known to Śrī Kambar, and had, therefore, been fabricated before the second half of the twelfth century A.D.

As already noted, there is no mention of 'Simhaḷa' in Bhoja's *Champu* ending with the *Sundara-Kāṇḍa*, nor anything corresponding to verses 17-25, Sarga 41, of the original epic. In the *Yuddha-Kāṇḍa*, however, added by Lakshmaṇasūri, we find in the *gadya* between verses 32 and 33: 'Just then Rāma and Sugrīva ascended the *Suvēla* and saw Lanka, the crest-jewel of the *Trikūta* mount, the torus of the lotus-flower that is the Ceylon Island (*Simhaḷa-dvīpa-kamala-karṇikām*), and the architectural skill of Visvakarma.' This

extract closely follows the original *Rāmāyaṇa* (*Yuddha*, Sarga 40, verses 1, 2 and 3/1) except that for Vālmiki's 'bright with pleasant groves', Lakshmaṇasūri substitutes his plumper, '*Simhaḷa-dvīpa-kamala-karṇikām*'. Bhoja was a great scholar and poet, and ruled in Ujjain and Dhāra till he died in 1050 A.D. It is reasonable therefore to assume that during his life-time, *Kishkindha*, Sarga 41, verses 17-25, were not current north of the Narmadā. I have no idea when Lakshmaṇasūri lived, but taking all the facts together, we may safely infer, that *Kishkindha*, Sarga 41, verses 17-25, were interpolated after 1050 A.D., and during the second half of the eleventh century when Chōḷa Power was at its zenith in the reigns of Rājendra Chōḷa and Kulottunga I (1050 to 1112).

Further, not only was hill-top Lanka made out to be 'Ceylon island', but Adam's bridge, the chain of sand-banks between the Rāmeṣvaram and Manaar islands, was identified with the Naḷasetu or causeway of stones, rocks, trees, bushes and creepers, raised by the Vānaras by command of Rāma (*Yuddha*, Sarga 22, verses 50-70). Adam's bridge was once a continuous isthmus which, according to Rāmeṣvaram temple records, 'was breached by storm' in 1480 A.D. (*Enc. Brit.*, Ed. XIV,

Vol. I, p. 159). When the forger of Sarga 41, verses 17-25, *Kishkindha*, made Agastya purposively fix the Mahendra in the Tāmbra-parṇī mouth, he evidently had in view an expedition to Ceylon starting from Kolkai Harbour, which is due west of Anurādhapura. But a hundred miles north-east of Kolkai, was a long and continuous isthmus answering admirably to the Naḷasetu, and making Rāmeṣvaram a more plausible starting-point for Rāma's expedition across the sea. In neither case, however, was there a north to south causeway a hundred *yojans* long, between two hills, the Mahendra and Suvela, as in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. When therefore Lakshmaṇasūri wrote of Rāma's ascent of the Suvela, and of his view thence of Lanka, 'the crest-jewel of the *Trikūta*, and the torus of the lotus that was Ceylon island', it is obvious he had no idea of any particular hills in 'Simhaḷa-dvīpa' answering to the Suvela and *Trikūta* of Vālmīki.

The faking of Adam's bridge into Naḷasetu and the consequential change in the starting-point of Rāma's expedition from Kolkai Harbour to Dhanushkoti was probably synchronous with the consecration of the Rāmeṣvara Lingam and the erection of the great Rāmeṣvara temple in the Rāmeṣvaram island.

For a century and a quarter (985–1112), three great Cholas, Rājarāja, Rājendra and Kulottunga I, were all powerful in South India. They were devoted Śaivites, and Rājarāja built the famous Bṛhad-Īṣvara temple in Tanjore. Kulottunga's successor Vikrama-Chola (1112–27) was a bigoted Śaivite, and persecuted the great Vaiṣṇava reformer Rāmānuja and his disciples. The great Hoysala king Viṣṇu-Vardhana (1104–41), a disciple of Rāmānuja, made war on him, captured Talkād and added the ancient Ganga kingdom to his own. From the days of Viṣṇu-Vardhana and for nearly two centuries, the Hoysalas displaced the Cholas as the Paramount Power in South India. In their inscriptions of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, there are several references to the 'Setu' as the southern end of India. A Hoysala is said to be the best of kings 'between the Himāchala and Setu', and what is more, in an Arsikere inscription (No. 30 of 1134 A.D.), *Rāmeṣvaram* is given as the southern boundary of the Hoysala dominions (*Rice's Inscriptions*, Vol. V, Part I, p. 121). There is thus good reason to believe that Ceylon became Lanka, and Adam's bridge Naḷasetu, during the century (1000–1100) of unquestioned Chola supremacy in South India. It was no doubt, during the same period, and

under Chola auspices, the Rāmeṣvaram temple was built over a Lingam whose consecration was attributed to Śrī Rāma himself, though there is nothing in the *Rāmāyaṇa* even remotely suggesting it. On the other hand, Rāma and his mother Kausalya worshipped Viṣṇu as Nārāyaṇa and Janārdana (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 4, verse 33 and Sarga 6, verses 3 and 4) and Rāma, when he was about to enter the Sarayu, enjoined on Vibhīṣhaṇa, the worship of ‘Jagannātha, the family deity of the Ikshvākus’ (*Uttara*, Sarga 108, verse 28). In the *Rāmāyaṇa* again, Viṣṇu is the eternal deity, greater than Īṣvara (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 1, verse 7, and *Bāla*, Sarga 75, verses 15–20). *Per contra*, Rāvaṇa was a Lingam-worshipper and a great devotee of Īṣvara. Wherever he went, he carried a golden Linga which he fixed in a platform of sand, and worshipped with flowers, scents, dance and song (*Uttara*, Sarga 31, verses 42–44).

Further, during the century and a half of ‘oppression by the Tamils’ mentioned by the ‘*Mahāwaṇṣo*’, the Tamils settled on a large scale in North Ceylon, driving the islanders to the hilly south, and there are now half a million Ceylonese Tamils descended from these ancient settlers. Brahmanism naturally dominated Buddhism, ‘the holy places were desecrated’, *the dispirited Sinhalese accepted*

'*Simhaḷa*' as a synonym for *Rāvaṇa's Lanka*, and great Parākramabāhu himself, imitated Rājarāja's device of the standing king in his own coins, and patronised both *Buddhist and Brahmin priests*. Again, not content with faking the Dhanushkoti and Naḷasētu and making Śrī Rāma consecrate a Lingam in Rāmeṣvaram, the Tamils carried their politico-religious propaganda into Ceylon itself. As recently as July 1939, both the *Illustrated Times of India* and the *Hindu* had an article by Mr. S. V. O. Somanader on the 'Hanumān Theertham' in Ceylon and I make no apology for giving an abstract of it below. "Every year during Āṣṭī Amāvāsai, a big Hindu festival ending in a sacred bath in a *historic pond* adjoining an even *more historic temple*, takes place at the *East Ceylon* village of Amritgali. Thousands of pilgrims from various parts of Ceylon come to this temple to perform religious rites and bathe in the sacred pond to wash away their sins. Intense religious fervour is displayed by the pilgrims including self-torture, with the devotees' cheeks pierced by silver arrows and their backs with steel-hooks. Sometimes mere boys and even women go through this ordeal. The origin of this temple is traced back to the *Kṛta-Yuga*, when *Rāma*, an *avatār* of Viṣṇu, led his army to Lanka

(Ceylon), to fight the Demon King Rāvaṇa. It was Rāma's custom to instal a Lingam at every place he halted, and remove it after worship to be taken with him on his travels. Finding a beautiful pond amid trees, he camped at this place, and after the usual *pooja* tried to remove the Lingam, but found it could not be removed. And so it came about, a temple was raised here. As to the pond, tradition states it was in this *very pool*, *Hanumān* dipped his burning tail with which he devastated Lanka. The festival is even now known locally among the *Tamils* as *Hanumān Theertha Triviḷa*." [Note: This is just 'impudent', as the *Sundara-Kāṇḍa*, Sarga 54, verse 50 says 'Hanumān quenched his tail-fire (*lāṅgūlāgnim*) in the sea (*Samudra*).] "After the customary rites, the Theertham takes place at noon, when thousands of devotees with upraised hands and crying 'Arohara', bathe briskly in the pool, as soon as the temple deity borne on an Ox *Vāhanam*, has been dipped in the water."

Īṣvara was the saviour and patron-deity of the Rākshasa race (*Uttara*, Sarga 4, verses 27-29). Rāvaṇa's devotion to the Lingam (*Uttara*, Sarga 31, verses 42-44) was therefore perfectly natural. But the Tamil settlers who faked the shrine at Amritgali were bigoted Śaivites, and they evidently considered it the

correct thing to transfer Rāvaṇa's habitual worship of the Lingam to Rāma himself. Again, several years ago, I read an article on ' Nuwara Eliya ', an open grassy plateau amid forests, and learnt that according to tradition, it was the very site where ancient Lanka had stood, and that the destruction of Lanka by Hanumān's burning tail accounted for the lack of arboreous growth.

Propaganda of this kind, endlessly repeated century after century, and perpetuated by shrines like Rāmeṣvaram, has sunk deep into the bones of the Mainland Hindoos, even like the silly story of Demons Rāhu and Ketu swallowing up the Sun and the Moon, time after time. It is no wonder then that even great intellectuals like Dr. Tagore, Pandit Nehru and Śrī. Rājāji succumb to it. In June 1934, Dr. Tagore 'told the Ceylonese that queen Sītā of Ayōdhya was abducted and kept confined in their island by a ten-headed giant.' Paṇḍit Nehru in his speeches in Ceylon (July 1939) used Lanka and Ceylon as synonymous, and Śrī. Rājāji, welcoming him to Madras said the Pandit had come 'by air like *great Hanumān*' and 'he hoped they would succeed in their efforts *without enacting the Rāmāyaṇa*.' These be ominous words coming from the powerful Premier of Madras though a foremost

disciple of our great apostle of non-violence, and naturally enough, critical Śrī. S. Srinivasa Iyengar promptly and pertinently asked, 'is then Sir Baron Jayatilaka a Rāvaṇa?'

TAMIL-CEYLONESE ANTIPATHY

Ceylon is now another Ireland, with the same population and five-sixth of its area. The Buddhist Sinhalese and the Brahmanised Tamils, are distinct in race, religion and language, like the Catholic Celts and the Protestant Britishers of Ireland, and in both cases, the antipathy is rooted in forcible settlements, following on military conquest, and accompanied by religious persecution. In those days, the Buddhists were obnoxious to the Jains as well as Brahmins. In Vol. I, page 307, of his '*Mysore*', Lewis Rice, the great archaeologist who discovered at Brahmagiri the Aśoka inscriptions that sanctify Mysore, writes: 'It was during this period, or in 788 A.D., according to Wilson, a great religious discussion took place at *Kāñchi* between Buddhists and Jains before King Hemasītala *who was a Buddhist*. The Jains were victorious and the Buddhists in lieu of being ground in oil-mills according to the conditions of the contest, were banished to Kandy in *Ceylon*, the king embracing the Jain faith.' It was in 788 A.D., too, the great

Śankara was born. He wrote his famous *Bhāṣhya* when only 12 (?), and went to Prayāg to meet Kumārila, controvert his *Karma-Mīmāṃsa* philosophy, and persuade him to write a 'Vārtika' (explanatory commentary) on his *Bhāṣhya*. But he saw Kumārila wasting away on a pyre of glowing paddy-husk, and the Bhaṭṭa told him : 'I must end my life to expiate two sins. I had my *Buddhist* Guru killed, and following Jaimini I denied a personal God'. Śankara however assured him : " You are 'Guha' (*Kārtikeya*) born on earth to destroy *Sugatas*, who turn their backs on *Vedic karma* " (Mādhava's *Śankara-Vijaya*, Sarga VII, verse 106). The persecution of the Buddhists began about 180 B.C. in the days of Pushyamitra, who crushed the life out of Bṛhadratha, his unsuspecting Maurya Emperor, and usurped his throne. In Cunningham's *Archæological Report* for 1863-64, we find : ' Again, after the fall of the Maurya dynasty, in 178 B.C., we find Pushyamitra, king of Pātaliputra, offering 100 Dinars for the head of every *Śramaṇa* in Śākala (p. 41) '.

There is reason to believe that Patañjali, the grammarian, was Pushyamitra's preceptor and Adhvaryu-priest. Pushyamitra is Patañjali's hero. ' Sabha ', he says, denotes the halls of kings like Chandragupta and Pushyamitra,

ignoring Buddhist Aṣoka. We also find : ' Pushyamitra sacrifices (*yajāte*). Here *we* conduct Pushyamitra's Sacrifice. Pushyamitra is a liberal largess-giver '. Pushyamitra's hatred of the Śramaṇas is crystallised in Patañjali's ' Śramaṇa-Brahmaṇa ' as an example of ' mutual antipathy ', like ' dog and jackal ', and ' crow and owl '. Patañjali was a bigoted Brahman. Under the merciful and tolerant Aṣoka, Brahmans were apparently permitted to practise their sacrifices, but with substitutes fashioned out of flour-paste and shaped like the prescribed animals. Such a substitute is the ' *piṣṭa-paṣu* ' of the Mādhyama Brahmans of these days. But Patañjali would not hear of substitutes. The actual ' object ' (*dravya*), the live animal, must be killed. ' There is nothing, ' he says, ' to be gained by killing a lump of dough (*piṣṭa-piṇḍim*) '. Again, quoting the *Brāhmaṇa*, ' in the spring, a Brahman should perform the *Agnisṭoma* and other sacrifices ', Patañjali asks, ' *Ijyāyāḥ kim prayojanam* '? (What is the good of sacrificing ?) And he answers straightway : ' In Paradise, divine nymphs become his wives and lie under him. ' Neither the *Śukla-Yajus* nor the *Kṛṣṇa-Yajus*, nor any *Brāhmaṇa* so far as I know, refers to this ' exceeding great reward ' of a sacrifice. It is not unlikely that Patañjali's

active brain first conceived this alluring idea, and that after centuries of Purāṇic propaganda, it became an article of 'Sanātani' faith, and helped to ensure the ultimate triumph of Brahmanism over Jainism and Buddhism.

Further, in the *Rāmāyaṇa* itself, great and righteous Rāma is *audaciously* exploited to discredit the great and good Buddha, though both Brahmans and Buddhists are agreed that Rāma was anterior to Buddha. In *Ayodhya*, Sarga 109, verse 34, Rāma says : 'as is a thief, so surely is the Buddha : Know that Tathāgatha is an atheist (*nāstika*)' (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 109, verse 34). Such was 'Odium theologicum' in India in the bad old days which began with Pushyamitra and Patañjali.

So, between Sugrīva and Rāma speaking through an interpolator, Ceylon island became Lanka on the Trikūta, the Buddhist Simhalese and their 'Mahendra-bright' ruler (is 'Mihindo' Pāli for Mahendra?) became Rāvaṇa and his Rākshasas, and the Buddha himself, a thief and an atheist rolled into one. These became settled facts of Indian history since about 1000 A.D., and our great and good Rājājīvāl, the Śrī. Rāma of South India, warns the Ceylonese not to provoke another Rāmāyaṇa War.

Nearly twenty-five years ago, my learned brother told me after a visit to Ceylon that the Sinhalese were 'militant Buddhists' (apparently a contradiction in terms), and had developed a special dislike for the Tamils. Neither he nor I was able to make out at the time why this was so, and it was only a decade later that I chanced upon the background of this antipathy in the '*Mahāvaṃso*' account of the long-drawn oppression and religious persecution of the Sinhalese by the Tamil invaders from the Chōla and Pāṇḍya kingdoms. So too, the Tabarra keeps alive the memory of Kerbela and the Shia grievance, though a millennium and a quarter old, and the I.R.A. avenge the wrongs of their ancestors by sowing explosive time-bombs all over rich and wicked England.

It was therefore with deep regret and pain that I read in the *Hindu* in June 1934, the announcement of our illustrious poet that he 'told the Ceylonese that Queen Sītā had been abducted and kept confined in their island by a ten-headed giant'. I felt that such a statement by so great and good an Indian, stigmatizing Ceylon as the mother of a race of man-eating demons and a lustful ten-headed monster, must exacerbate Sinhalese feelings against Indians, and it struck me that the *facts* about Lanka, Rākshasas and Vānaras

which I had accidentally discovered, might, if published, help to mollify Sinhalese animosity, rooted in a historic wrong and envenomed by a vicious perversion of Vālmiki's *Itihāsa*.

It was in these circumstances that I began my work on Lanka and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. I wrote the First Chapter of this book in 1934 giving my reasons for holding that Ceylon cannot possibly be the Lanka of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. I then gave a *detailed* account of Rāma's journey from Ayodhya to Śarabhaṅga's hermitage at the junction of the Śarabhaṅga and Paisūni rivers. An abstract of this detailed account is embodied in Chapter XIV of this book. From Singraur (Sringaverapura) on the north bank of the Ganges, the *text* takes us through, (1) Prayāg, (2) the Sacred Banyan tree (*Vaṭaṣṣyāmaḥ*) on the south bank of the Jumna, (3) Chitrakūt hill, (4) Atri's hermitage, (5) Virādha's burial-pit, and (6) Śarabhaṅga's hermitage. Of these, Singraur and Chitrakūt were well-known places and identified in the *District Gazetteers* as the Sringaverapura and Chitrakūta of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. In my detailed account, I showed, (1) that the visit to Prayāg was interpolated, and that Prayāg was *then* part of the bed of a great lake (*Sāgara*) formed by the meeting of the

waters of the Ganges and the Jumna, (2) that the Sacred Banyan tree grew near Bar Dewal at Katra (Lat. $25^{\circ} 16'$; Long. $81^{\circ} 30'$) and was probably destroyed by Mahmud of Ghazni, (3) that Anasūya hill, nine miles south of Chitrakūt, is Atri's hermitage of the text, (4) that Biradh kund of the Topo map three miles south of Anasūya hill, is the pit where Rākshasa Virādha was buried by Rāma and Lakshmaṇa, (5) that Śarabhanga's hermitage, a *yojan* and more to the south of Biradh kund, lay at the junction of the Śarabhanga and Paiṣuni rivers at the north foot of the Panna Range, and (6) that the Vindhya and the Śaivala which enclosed the Daṇḍaka forest according to Agastya, were the Panna Range on the north and the Vindhyan to the south. With Singraur and Chitrakūt as landmarks to guide me, a perusal of the relevant *Gazetteers* and a scrutiny of large-scale survey maps enabled me to arrive at the above conclusions. A distinguished friend of my late brother who took a kindly interest in my work advised me to append a sketch map of Rāma's route to my description, and the same in two Sections will be found at the end of Chap. XIV of this book. A learned and distinguished University Professor, however, opined that my 'labours had been anticipated long ago by other Scholars '

and 'in particular, by F. E. Pargiter, I.C.S., in an article published in the *Journal of the R. A. Society of G. B. and Ireland* for 1894 (pp. 231-64).' I read the article and wondered why the Professor referred me to Mr. Pargiter. Mr. Pargiter purports to deal with the story of Rāma's exile as contained in three versions: (1) Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, (2) *Rāmōpākhyāna* of the Bhārata and (3) *Ṣoḍasha-rājika*, *ibid.* (p. 232). He begins with the assertion: 'The main features of Central and Southern India and Ceylon portrayed in the poems are *undoubtedly correct*, and only a minute enquiry can show whether the details agree with nature or not' (pp. 233 and 234). Towards the end, he says: 'If my identifications are reasonable, we must conclude that the author of the *Rāmāyaṇa* had a real knowledge of Central and Southern India and whatever historic truth may be contained in the story of Rāma's exile and *Invasion of Ceylon*, the geographical knowledge could hardly have been obtained except from an actual visit to those regions by some person' (pp. 263 and 264). Pargiter's investigation is thus based on the assumption (1) that the main features of South India and Ceylon portrayed in the poems are *undoubtedly correct* and that the *Rāmāyaṇa* is the story of Rāma's 'Invasion

of Ceylon'. Taking Ceylon to be *Lanka*, Pargiter places Kishkindha 'at or close to Bellary'. The Vindhyan therefore to the south of Kishkindha and between Bellary and Ceylon, must be a South Indian Vindhyan. Pargiter proceeds: "*Sampāti* whose tidings of Sītā would come more appropriately in the *South* than in the *well-known* Vindhyan, said that when he fell on this Vindhyan mountain, he looked about and concluded this must be the Vindhyan on the shore of the Southern Ocean. Considering all things, it seems to me the 'Vindhyan' meant here, *must be the hills and plateau of South Maisur*. These stretch across from the western to the eastern ghats, and form a dividing ridge in the south, like the Vindhyan range in the *north*. The waves of the sea are compared to the ridges of these mountains, a simile very appropriate to a mountain plateau." *Sampāti's* Vindhyan is therefore the Nilgiri Cross-range parting the Mysore and Nilgiri Districts, and the sea at its foot the undulating Mysore Plateau of hard gneiss. Mr. Pargiter however overlooks the statements in the text, that it was on the shore, and with the waters, of this same sea below the Vindhyan, the same *Sampāti* offered an oblation (*Udaka*) to the manes of Jatāyu, and that the *north* shore of this sea was at the

south foot of the Vindhyan, whereas the plateau of Mysore begins at the *north* foot of the Nilgiri ridge, and extends *northward* to the Tungabhadra, and the Tungabhadra, according to Pargiter, 'is the chief river of Kishkindha, the country round Bellary' (p. 257).

I will now take Śarabhangā's hermitage which both Pargiter and myself have attempted to locate. The text says a day's march took Rāma to Atri's place, and the *next* day's march to Śarabhangā's. I placed Atri at Anasūya hill, nine miles south of Chitrakūt, and Śarabhangā at the junction of the Paiṣuni and Śarabhangā, eight miles south of Anasūya hill. *Sītā walked with Rāma*, and it is reasonable to believe she made seventeen miles in two marches. Mr. Pargiter however locates Śarabhangā 'near *Narwar* on the northern slope of the *Vindhyan* mountains in the Bhopal State'. There *is* a Narwar in Bhopal, below an outlying peak of the Vindhyan, 1,937 feet high. It is not a place of note and is not referred to under Bhopal in the *Imperial Gazetteer*. It is on Lat. 23° 20' and Long. 78°, while Chitrakūt hill is on Lat. 25° 10' and Long. 80° 51' and the distance from Chitrakūt to Narwar is about 250 miles as the crow flies. So Pargiter would have it that Sītā

did 250 miles in two marches from Chitrakūt to 'Narwar on the north slope of the Bhopal Vindhyan' !! The entire essay of Pargiter, I must add, is a farrago of trash of this sort.

The same distinguished Professor referred also to a paper on the situation of Lanka read by Sirdar Kibe of Indore at the First Indian Oriental Conference, but not published in the *Proceedings* of the Conference. I happened however to have read it in an issue of the *Times of India*. Sirdar Kibe tried to make out that the Choḷi village (Lat. 22° 15'; Long. 75° 40') on the S.-E. shore of a largish lake (ten furlongs by three) and midway between the Vindhyan range and the Narbada at Mandleṣvar, was Rāvaṇa's Lanka. The roads from Maheṣvar and Mandleṣvar to Mhow, meet at Choḷi. But Choḷi is in open terrain sloping gently from the Vindhyan foot to the Narbada. There is no hill or island in the lake below it, while Lanka on the Trikūta top was surrounded by a lake. Mandleṣvar is 530 feet high, Choḷi 700 feet, and five miles north of Choḷi is the thousand-foot contour line at the Vindhyan foot. Again, Sirdar Kibe overlooked the fact that Mahesvar, the Capital city of the illustrious Ahalyabayi, was the Māhishmati of Haihaya Kārtavīrya, and later, of Chedi Śiṣupāla (*Māgha*, Sarga 2, verse 61). Rāvaṇa's Lanka

may not, therefore, be looked for in a village of the plain, only seven miles N.-E. of Maheṣvar the Capital city of Arjuna, Rāvaṇa's mighty thousand-armed captor.

My position was thus a difficult one. From the Mahendragiri, Hanumān crossed the hundred-*yōjan* sea, and reached Lanka. From the Mahendra-dvār, Rāvaṇa drove Sītā in an ass-drawn car to Lanka. Neither of them is said to have crossed the Narbada. Rāma's bridge too, from the Mahendra to the Suvela, did not cross the Narbada. Sirdar Kibe therefore very properly searched for Lanka between the Vindhyan and the Narbada so as to conform to the fundamental instruction of Sugrīva to the south-bound Vānaras (*Kishkindha*, Sarga 41, verse 8). But these are days of intense regional patriotism in Hindu India, and the Sirdar's vision appears to have been limited, though unintentionally, to Indore territory, when he sought to locate what is incomparably the most famous battle-field in Indian History. In the result, he ignored the Trikūta and Suvela hills facing each other, the lake that *encircled* them, and the lay-out of Lanka on the Trikūta *top*, and placed Lanka in an impossible position.

Pargiter stuck to recent tradition, assumed that Ceylon was Lanka and was enabled by

a glance at the map of India to realise and announce that the Nilgiri ridge and the Mysore plateau must, respectively, be the Vindhyan range of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and the sea (*Samudra* or *Sāgara*) below it. In the first chapter of my original essay, which is also the first chapter of this book, I gave conclusive reasons for holding that the identification of Ceylon with Rāvaṇa's Lanka was *irrational to a degree*. The learned Professor does not state his own opinion in the matter. Does he assume like Pargiter, as an unquestionable fact, that Lanka is Ceylon? Or does he agree with Sirdar Kibe that Lanka is Choḷi between the Vindhyan and the Narbada, *a thousand miles north of Ceylon*? As for myself. I began my first chapter with the question 'Where is Lanka?' I then raised the question: 'Is Lanka Ceylon or in Ceylon?' And as the result of a lengthy argument, I answered: '*It is clear therefore that Ceylon has nothing to do with the Lanka of Vālmīki.*'

Apparently, among Indian Orientalists including the learned Professor, Pargiter's exposition of the geography of Rāma's exile possesses the authority of a Privy Council decision in an Indian Court of Law. Sirdar Kibe, however, could not swallow Pargiter's assertion that the rocky plateau stretching

north of the Nilgiris right up to the *Tungabhadra*, must be the South Sea of Vālmiki south of the Vindhyan, on whose *South shore* Trikūta rose with Lanka on its top. Possibly that was why Sirdar Kibe's paper was not published in the *Proceedings* of the Conference. It was natural therefore for the Pargiter-ridden Professor to hold that my essay covering Rāma's journey from Ayodhya to Śarabhanga's hermitage was 'unfit for publication in a research journal'. This was also the opinion of a well-known University Professor of Sanskrit. I had imagined too, that the sketch maps appended to my essay would thrill the Professors, and secure unquestioning acceptance of my views. But they clean ignored my maps and left me in a fix. Two learned ladies, however, to whom I submitted my essay, agreed with me that Ceylon could not be Rāvaṇa's hill-top city of Lanka. But they were critical ladies, and were not satisfied with a mere negative. They wanted me to get down forthwith to brass tacks. They were intensely interested in Lanka where Sītā was confined and Rāma destroyed wicked Rāvaṇa and his Rākshasa hosts. Head Mistress Sister Subba Lakshmi, B.A., L.T., who is a Sanskrit Paṇḍitā, would not let me rest and wrote 'I am eagerly waiting to know *where*

you have located Lanka of *Rāmāyaṇa*'. Śrī. Viṣālākshi Viṣvanāthan, my brother's daughter-in-law, who is good in English and great in Tamil, asked me in Tamil: 'If I wish to go to Lanka *now*, can I go? Which is the way?' I now realised that the ardent desire of these cultured ladies to know where Lanka stood, was but the reflex of the deep-seated instinct of a simple and essentially righteous people to whom visits to *Kshetrams* are a chief and cherished part of religion. The story of Sītā, the wonder-girl of the king seer venerated through the ages, has a unique power of appeal to the Hindu heart. As she was being taken away shivering, in Rāvaṇa's ass-drawn chariot, Sītā noticed old Jatāyu half-asleep on his tree, and told him: 'This wicked Rākshasa is carrying me away. He is strong, cruel and well-armed. You cannot fight him. But tell Rāma and Lakshmaṇa all about my abduction'. But noble Jatāyu fought Rāvaṇa all the same, and when he collapsed bleeding from many wounds, Sītā ran to him as to a brother, embraced him and wept over him. Rāvaṇa however, rushed towards her, and parting her from Jatāyu, carried her off. When in the guise of an ascetic, Rāvaṇa had tried to seduce her, she called him a sneak, thief and jackal, and told him he ought to be ashamed of

himself. But even after Jatāyu fell, and as she was being driven away from Pañchavaṭi, she remained fearless and wide awake, and when the chariot crossed the Pampa and ascended the Pass below R̥ṣyamūka which led to Lanka, she quietly made up her jewels into a bundle unnoticed by Rāvaṇa, and dropped them in sight of five Vānaras seated on the hill-side. And it was this forethought of this wonder-woman of the ages, that put the first ray of hope into Rāma, and enabled him to trace her to Lanka and restore her to Freedom. The main action therefore of the Epic starts with the forcible removal of Sītā from Pañchavaṭi and her confinement in a secluded grove of Lanka after a long drive with Rāvaṇa in an ass-drawn chariot. And it culminates in the ascent of Trikūta hill by a Vānara army, the battle before Lanka, and the destruction of Rāvaṇa by Rāma.

It appears from the above, that the ' locale ' of the main action comprised, Rāma's Pañchavaṭi hut at one end and Rāvaṇa's Lanka at the other, the road or cart-track connecting them, and sundry regions abutting on the road. It is clear too, from the text that this road was negotiable right through by an ass-drawn chariot. Further, in describing Rāvaṇa's drive from Pañchavaṭi to Lanka, the text

refers to three unmistakable land-marks on the way. One is the Pampa Lake which had to be crossed (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 54, verse 5). Another was a peaked hill bordering on the road at whose foot Sītā dropped her jewels. The third was the cleft (*drāra*) across the *Mahendragiri* where Supārśva met Rāvaṇa and Sītā on their way to Lanka.

From Pañchavaṭi too, Rāma started in search of Sītā. Not far from his hermitage, where Jatāyu had struggled with Rāvaṇa, he had ample evidence that a powerful well-armed Rākshasa driving in an ass-drawn chariot, had forcibly taken away Sītā. The pursuit of the abductor was therefore facilitated by the trail of a chariot and the hoof-marks of the asses that drew it. Following Rāvaṇa's track, Rāma reached the lotus-lake of Pampa and he too crossed it like Rāvaṇa. The way across the Pampa towards Lanka ran west to east, and comprised a long cause-way (*sudūra saṃkramah*, *Āraṇya*, Sarga 75, verse 30) which led up to the Rṣyamūka hill where Sītā had dropped her jewels in front of five Vānaras.

On the eastern shore of Pampa, below the Rṣyamūka hill, Rāma met Sugrīva and his four Vānara companions, and Sugrīva produced the bundle of jewels dropped by Sītā from

Rāvaṇa's chariot. It is thus clear that Pampa and Ṛṣyamūka were adjoining as well as arresting land-marks on the Janasthān-Lanka route, and that *both* Rāvaṇa and Rāma crossed the Pampa and passed below the Ṛṣyamūka. Beyond the Pampa and the Ṛṣyamūka foot, Rāvaṇa drove on till he met Supārṣva fishing in the river-gorge that pierced the Mahendragiri. By Supārṣva's sufferance, he descended the gorge, and crossing the great Basin (*Sāgara*) that stretched south of the Mahendra, he reached Lanka with Sītā.

The south-bound Vānaras led by Aṅgada searched, as instructed by Sugrīva, the 'thousand-headed' Vindhyan Range to begin with. On the Vindhyan ridge, they learnt from Sampāti, father of Supārṣva, that the Mahendra Pass was Rāvaṇa's key to Lanka. From Mahendragiri therefore, Hanumān crossed the Sāgara and reached Lanka. Rāma too, on receiving Hanumān's report of Sītā's discovery, marched to the Mahendragiri and had a causeway run across the Sāgara to facilitate the transport of his Vānara army to Lanka. The bridge or causeway extended from Mahendragiri to Suvelagiri facing the Trikūta hill. The bridge ran north to south, and its length across the Basin or Sāgara was one hundred *yojanas*.

It would thus seem that Rāvaṇa and Rāma took the same way from Pañchavaṭi to Lanka, Rāvaṇa in his chariot and Rāma on foot. It also appears that both Rāvaṇa and Rāma met three striking land-marks on their way, the Pampa lake, the Ṛṣyamūka hill, and the Mahendra hill, one after the other. Again, a scrutiny of the text discloses the following facts :—The Mahendra with its cleft was a part of the Vindhyan Range. Trikūta crowned by Lanka, rose between the Vindhyan Range and the Narbadā river. The Sāgara below the Mahendra *cum* Vindhyan was crossed by Rāvaṇa, Hanumān and Rāma in succession. Rāvaṇa drove through it in his ass-drawn chariot, Hanumān swam across it and Rāma had it bridged by Naḷa. In *Kishkindha*, Sarga 65 and verse 24 of Sarga 61, the crossing (*langhana*) of the Sāgara is expressed as ‘*gamana*’ (going) and ‘*plavana*’ (swimming), and not even once as ‘*dayana*’ or ‘*patana*’ (flying).

It is again significant, that the text makes no mention of a ‘*Sāgara*’ or ‘*samudra*’ when dealing with Rāvaṇa’s *first* journey from Lanka, to seek the help of Mārīcha, and his return to Lanka by the latter’s advice. That strongly suggests that the depression below the Mahendra *one hundred yōjanas* in width, was only a shallow river-basin negotiable by an ass-

drawn chariot in the spring and summer, between March and June.

It is again a fact of cardinal importance that Vālmīki uses '*yojana*' in two senses. As a rule it is four *krōsas*. A *krōsa* is a *dhanus-sahasra* (one thousand bow-lengths) and a *dhanus* is four cubits or two yards. A *yojana* is thus eight thousand yards or four and a half miles. But the *yojana* is also a *dhanuṣ-ṣata* (one hundred bow-lengths or two hundred yards) as when Sugrīva speaks of the distance Vāli threw the corpse of Dundubhi (*Kishkindha*, Sarga 11, verse 47, read with verse 66). The one hundred *yojanas* Hanumān swam from the Mahendra to Lanka may therefore be either four hundred and fifty miles or eleven and a half miles.

Turning now to the search by the south-bound Vānaras, it is important to note (1) that the Narbada riverain lay south of the Vindhya and was to be searched next to the Vindhyas, (2) that the search was actually confined to a section of the Vindhyan which had an abruptly-pointed south-west end and therefore ran N.-E. to S.-W., (3) that a sea lay along the *south* foot of the Vindhyan with the hills Trikūta and Suvela rising from its *south* shore, a hundred *yojans* away, (4) that Hanumān swam across this sea to the Trikūta hill *with-*

out meeting the Narbada. The Narbada south of the Vindhyan, refers obviously to the east to west course of the river, five hundred miles long, between the Vindhyan and the Sātpura Ranges. This five hundred-mile course begins from its junction with the Gaur, four miles south of Jubbulpore (Lat. $23^{\circ} 5'$ and Long. $79^{\circ} 58'$). For eighteen miles, the Narbada eats its way *south to north* across the north wall of the Sātpuras before meeting the Gaur, its powerful tributary from the north-east, and is then turned aside N.-W. and West into the Jubbulpore plains. Emerging from its famous constriction between sheer walls of marble near Bheraghat, the Narbada enters a broad and fertile basin between the Vindhyan and Sātpuras which extends two hundred miles westward to Handia (Long. 77°) before it narrows again near the Māndhāta hills. Along this stretch of two hundred miles, the Vindhyan rises sheer north of the valley, the average fall of the river is about a foot and a half a mile, and the width of the valley from river to ridge rarely exceeds *half a degree* of latitude or 35 miles as the crow flies.

Having regard to the facts set forth above, it was clear that if the Suvela and Trikūta hills rose between the Vindhyan and the Narbada, they must be looked for in the

northern section of the Narbada basin between Lat. 23° to 24° and Long. 80° to 77° . I naturally began my search with Degree sheet 55·M, comprising the area between Lat. 23° to 24° and Long. 80° to 79° , as it is in this sheet, close to Lat. 23° and Long. 80° , the Narbada *begins* its westward course after leaving the Sātpuras to the south. As luck would have it, sheet 55·M, contained the entire 'locale' of the main action from Pañchavaṭi to Lanka with the connecting highway and cart-tracks. A scrutiny of the coloured sheet showed (1) the pointed S.-W. end of the Vindhyan, twenty-two miles due north of the Marble Rocks, (2) the Katas cleft across the Vindhyan (corresponding to *Mahendra-dvār*) thirty miles due north of the Congress Nagar of 1939 on the north bank of the Narbada, and (3) two hills facing each other, sixteen miles north of Jubbulpore and *twelve miles* south-south-east of the Katas cleft. These hills surrounded on three sides by the great Hiran river are unquestionably the Suvela and the Trikūta, a hundred *yōjans* or Stadia to the south of the *Mahendra-dvār*. When I realised all this, I gazed at the coloured Degree sheet 55·M, and bowed down before it, even as a humble truth-seeker before his truth-revealing Guru. If a lightly coloured Degree sheet, four miles

to the inch, could reveal all this, it was obvious to me that coloured mile to inch Topo maps covering the same ground would exhibit the same features with convincing clearness. Long ago, I had the unspeakable good fortune to serve as a Personal Assistant under the great and good Sir K. Seshadri Iyer, the born Engineer and Statesman who harnessed the Sivasamudram Falls for Mysore, and thereby pioneered hydro-electric enterprise for the Eastern Hemisphere. He put me to work on his D.P.W. Files and enabled me to realise the unique informative and educative value of coloured mile to inch Topo sheets, especially in hilly country where the naked eye often deceives even within the narrow broken horizons open to it.

Out of the sixteen mile to inch Topo sheets comprised in 55·M, three maps 55·M/10, 55·M/14 and 55·M/15 show, between them, the common route of Rāvaṇa and Rāma from the western shore of the Pampa to Lanka. They contain the three great landmarks the protagonists met on their way, the Pampa lake (now dry), the R̥ṣyamūka hill-fort, and the Mahendra-dvār. They also show distinctly, three other landmarks in the neighbourhood of the route, the Kishkindha cave, the Prasravaṇa hill, and the pointed south-west end

of the Vindhyan, where the Kaimur-Vindhyan splits into two, and is re-aligned beyond the Kaimur Pass as the Bhanrer Vindhyan. In these circumstances I decided to deal in the geographical part of this booklet with the Pampa-Lanka section of the tract through which Rāvaṇa drove Sītā to Lanka, followed with difficulty by Rāma on foot. Chapters III to IX of this volume deal with this same tract and I began Chapter III with the location of Trikūṭa itself, once Lanka-crowned, in response to the urge of Srimatis Subba Lakshmi and Viṣālakshi. I found I acted wisely. The former wrote to me: 'It is most interesting, and the points regarding the location of Lanka are most convincing. If people don't believe it all, it will be only due to their stubborn obstinacy.' Sister Subba Lakshmi is well versed in Sanskrit and a hard-headed Head Mistress of many years' standing and, her unqualified approval satisfied me that I had reason on my side when I located Lanka on Indrana hill fifteen miles north of Jubbulpore. Thus encouraged, I ventured, though with some hesitancy, to submit Chapters III to IX to Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyer, K.C.S.I., the distinguished thinker, scholar and administrator, and a former Vice-Chancellor of the Benares Hindu University. He wrote: 'I found the

notes of your research into the geography of Lanka and Rāma's route thereto, entrancing. I admire the patient research and the critical spirit you have brought to bear upon your investigation. Your arguments are *prima facie* sound. At any rate, they challenge impartial investigation.'

Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyer added by way of advice: 'To make your note acceptable, get a suitable map drawn on a modest scale, noting only the general features of the country and marking only the places you refer to. It requires extraordinary patience and acuteness of vision to verify your statements in the Topo sheets. Could you not get some friend in the Survey Office to prepare an accurate sketch for you.' Sir Sivaswamy Aiyer gave me similar advice in connexion with my notes dealing with Rāma's route from Ayodhya to Śarabhanga's place, and I appended to my original essay two sketch maps on a scale of sixteen and four miles respectively to the inch, the same that I have now annexed by way of elucidation to Chapter XIV of this booklet. But these were clean ignored by the two learned University Professors who imagined that my labours must have been anticipated by a Mr. Pargiter who flourished as a Bengal Civilian in the last decade of the nineteenth century. I was moreover attacking millennium-

old traditions believed as gospel-truth all over India, and powerful vested interests had grown round this Dhanushkoti-Rāma's-bridge-Lanka fake of fakes. Sir P. S. S. himself quietly warns me : ' Your conclusions will of course give a shock to the orthodox reader.' The orthodox may denounce my sketch-maps as fakes, and I would have no answer to make except by reference to three Topo maps (55·M/10, 55·M/14 and 55·M/15) costing five rupees a set. The maps though procurable from the Map Record and Issue Office, Calcutta, are not available even in large Public Libraries. The maps themselves are authoritative, and the relevant section of the Evidence Act runs : ' The Court shall presume that maps purporting to be made by the authority of Government were so made, and are accurate, but maps made for the purposes of any cause must be proved to be accurate.' I decided therefore to get a thousand copies of an authorised extract covering 23° 20' to 23° 40' Lat., and 79° 35' to 80° Lon. prepared by the Survey of India Department itself, and that is the map I have prefixed to this book. This was the more necessary, as the tract in question, about six-hundred square miles in area, is an out of the way, thinly-peopled, roughly cut-up region of hills and forests nowhere within ten miles of a Railway.

And here I must record my deep indebtedness to Śrī. N. S. Harihara Iyer, of the Survey of India, for his invaluable help in preparing this map for the Map Publication Office.

In my next volume, I propose to set out in detail Rāma's route from Ayodhya to Matangavana, together with a special note on Rāma's time and character. I hope too, D.V. to include in it, a few chapters on the geography of the Ṛk-saṃhitā.

I feel happy to end this Preface with my grateful blessings to my grandchild Srīmatī Lakshmi, whose young eyes have proved very helpful in correcting the proofs of this work.

T. PARAMASIVA IYER.

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PART I
GEOGRAPHICAL

CHAPTER I

**Has the *Rāmāyaṇa* a Historic Basis? If so,
Where is Lanka ? And Who are the
Rākshasas and the Vānaras?**

RAMAYANA, according to the *Trikāṇḍaśeṣha* (Supplement to the *Amara Koṣa*), is the destruction of Rāvaṇa by Rāma (*Rāmena Rāvaṇa-vadho Rāmāyaṇam iti smṛtam*). The great war of Rāma and Rāvaṇa took place before the walls of Lanka. Never, before or after, was fought so fierce a battle. As the sky is like the sky, and the sea like the sea, so the Rāma-Rāvaṇa war could be compared to nothing besides. The essence of the *Rāmāyaṇa* is thus the triumph of Rāma in the siege and battle of Lanka. The Lanka war was thus another Trojan War. Rāma was the mightiest of archers, the twang of his *Kodaṇḍa* bow inspired mortal dread, and his victory over Rāvaṇa was the most resounding of victories. Resounding fame is ever the reward of great martial prowess, and stern Achilles and arrow-showerer Arjuna inspired the immortal Mahābhārata and the Iliad. In the latest Encyclopædia too, General Ludendorff, the annihilator of armies, 'atheist and anti-Christian heathen,' as he announced himself, when he recently

re-entered public life under the auspices of Herr Hitler, gets as much space, as the three greatest Rulers of all time, Aṣoka, Marcus Aurelius and Akbar, put together. The Trojan War, we know, had a historic basis, and the ruins of Ilium have been uncovered in the Hissarlik mound, close to the Aegean end of the Dardanelles. The site of Kurukshetra where the Kaurava cousins fought and nearly eighteen lacs of warriors found their grave, is also well known. It was easily recognised in the days of Kālidāsa of *Meghadūta* by the bleached bones of unburied warriors (*Pūrva Megha*, verse 48). But where is four-gated Lanka on the top of the Trikūta hill and surrounded by a sea ? And who are the Rākshasas ruled by Rāvaṇa, and after him, by his long-lived brother Vibhishana ? Who again are the Vānaras, and where is Kishkindha, the great cavernous gorge in the hills (known too, as such, to our ancient grammarians), where Aṅgada ruled after Sugrīva and Vāli ? Hissarlik was the traditional site of Ilium and Kurukshetra can be identified on the map with reference to its description in the *Mahābhārata*.

IS LANKA CEYLON OR IN CEYLON ?

As to Lanka however, the tradition of five centuries places it beyond Adam's bridge or

Rāma's bridge, a chain of sand-banks between the island of Rāmeṣvaram and the island of Manaar. This bridge is over thirty miles long, and runs west-north-west to east-south-east. As Lanka was surrounded by the sea, Rāma had to bridge the sea. The bridge was *a hundred yojans long and ran due north and south* from the foot of *Mahendragiri* in the north to *Surelagiri* (a hill adjoining Trikūta) on whose slopes Rāma marshalled his Vānara hosts.

WHAT IS THE YOJANA ?

The *yojana* is used in two senses in Vālmīki. It is generally used in the ordinary sense of four Krcas or Gorutas of one thousand *Dhanus* each (*Kaut.*, Adhi. 2, Prak. 38). A *Dhanus* is four *Hastas* or two yards, and that gives about four and a half miles to the *yojana*. Sugrīva however uses it in the sense of a stadium, and that evidently was the 'sports' sense.

The Greek 'Stadium' of about two hundred yards was the course for the short foot-race, and its user was extended to other sports like throwing quoits and swimming. A 'Nalpa' of four hundred Kishkus, corresponds to the stadium, but I have met with the word only in Subandhu's *Vāsavadatta*. When Sugrīva proposes a test of Rāma's strength he says

that Vāli threw the corpse of Dundubhi a 'yojan' distance, and he would be satisfied that Rāma was the stronger, if Rāma raised the skeleton of Dundubhi on his foot and threw it a distance of four hundred yards (*dvi-dhanuṣ-ṣate*, *Kishkindha*, Sarga 11, verse 72). The 'yojan' that Vāli threw it must be a 'dhanuṣ-ṣata' or two hundred yards, and not four and a half miles. Again when Aṅgada seated at the foot of the Vindhya on the north shore of the sea and surrounded by the great Vānara chiefs, questioned the latter as to who would brave the dangers of the sea and cross over to Trikūta a *hundred yojans* beyond (*Kishkindha*, Sarga 64, verse 18), nine of them from Gaja to Jāmbavan, felt fit to swim from ten to ninety *yojans*. Aṅgada was confident he could go over a hundred *yojans* at a stretch, but he was not sure if he was strong enough to return immediately after. Hanumān goes and reaches the 'Lamba' end of Trikūta before sunset, and waits for nightfall to ascend unobserved the Trikūta peak to Lanka. It also appears that this sea was dotted with hills one of which invited Hanumān to rest on its peak. The probabilities are therefore very strong, that here too, 'yojana' is used in a 'sports' sense, and that a *hundred yojans* is

about *eleven and a half miles*. Hanumān goes over in about eight hours, and it is not unlikely he did the hundred *yojans* partly wading and partly swimming, and resting occasionally on projecting hills. That is the more likely, as the sea was filled and the bridge was made up by trees and rocks pulled out by the Vānaras, and the bridge was completed in five days, fourteen *yojans* in the first day, and twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two and twenty-three *yojans* respectively, in the next four days (*Yuddha*, Sarga 22, verses 61 to 78).

LANKA CANNOT BE CEYLON

Adam's bridge is neither eleven and a half miles nor four hundred and fifty miles long. There is no hill in Rāmeṣvaram Island nor anywhere near Maṇḍapam. There is no hill in Manaar Island and none in the northern half of Ceylon (Lat. 7° 30' to 9° 30' including Anurādhapura), 'a vast arid zone rendered habitable only by a most skilful irrigation system'. Ceylon is twenty-five thousand square miles in extent with a population of five millions mainly Simhaḷese (who speak Āryan Pāli) and Tāmils. There are about four thousand primitive Veddahs, dwelling in rock-shelters and running wild in the woods. These surely are not the Rākshasas of the

Rāmāyaṇa. It is clear therefore Ceylon has nothing to do with the Lanka of Vālmīki, and Adam's bridge a chain of sand-banks thirty miles long, and running west-north-west to east-south-east cannot be 'Naḷasetu', eleven and a half miles or four hundred and fifty miles long, between two hills, Mahendra on the north and Suvela on the south. Rāma's bridge and Ceylon are thus palpable fakes. All the same, almost all Hindus believe that Adam's bridge is Naḷasetu and not long ago (June 1934) Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, our revered poet-singer, addressing a Madras audience, said : ' I told the Ceylonese, that Sītā, Queen of Ayodhya, was abducted and kept confined in their island by a ten-headed giant.' It is extraordinary too that no Hindu, Paṇḍit, English-educated, or illiterate, looks for a hill-top city on the other side of Adam's bridge corresponding to Lanka where Rāma enthroned Vibhīṣhaṇa. They have all however, like our illustrious poet, a vague notion that Ceylon is, or contains, the Lanka of Vālmīki. Where then, it may be asked, is the Lanka of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

IS THE RAMAYANA A MERE FABLE ?

Some hold that the entire epic was evolved out of the poet's imagination in view to inculcate great moral lessons. That, to me,

is as unthinkable as that Ceylon is, or contains, Lanka, though I remember to have read somewhere that Mahatma Gandhi was of that opinion. There is of course the supernatural element in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Avatār* of Viṣṇu and crores of minor Gods, *Śāpas* (curses) and *Varadānams* (desirable gifts), by Gods and Ṛshis, re-births and transformations of men as beasts and monsters, and the whole paraphernalia of the marvellous, miraculous and monstrous, which were regarded as legitimate embellishments of our post-Christian poetry and poetic prose, even though dealing with historic personages and incidents. The *deus ex machina* is everywhere in our later literature, and dominates everything. Sarasvatī descends to the world of mortals in Bāṇa's *Harsha-charitra* as well as Vidyāraṇya's *Śankara Vijaya*. In both it is a curse of Muni Dūrvāsa that brings her down. Śankara, Rāmānuja and Madhva are all Gods in human shape.

THE RAMAYANA FAMILIAR TO GREAT INTELLECTUALS OF PRE-CHRISTIAN TIME

Apart, however, from this supernatural element, the main incidents of the *Rāmāyaṇa* were familiar to the trustworthy and hard-headed author of the *Artha-Śāstra*, the great

dramatist Bhāsa whom it is the glory of Travancore to have rescued from unmerited oblivion, and the great grammarian Patañjali, and all these flourished long before the Christian Era commenced. Under the heading ‘*Indriya-jaya*’ (control of the senses), Kauṭilya says, ‘Rāvaṇa perished by excess of pride, refusing to restore a married woman’ (Adhi. I, Prak. 3). That reminds us of what Rāvaṇa said when advised by venerable Mālyavan to restore Sītā: ‘I will break thus into two, but never bend to any one. That is my inborn defect and I cannot change my innate character’ (*Yuddha Kāṇḍa*, Sarga 36, verse 11). Bhāsa was regarded as an old-time (*purāṇa*) dramatist by Kālidāsa of *Mālavikāgnimitra*. The *Bharata-rākya* of that drama shows, that that Kālidāsa flourished under Agnimitra in Viḍiṣa, about 160 B.C. Bhāsa has two dramas, the *Pratimā* and the *Abhisheka*, based on incidents in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. In the *Chārudatta* too of the same author, the inimitable Śakāra tells Vasantasena: ‘I will seize you by the hair and carry you off as Duṣṣāṣana did to Sītā’ (Anka I, verse 12). Again, under the *Sūtra* ‘*Upād-deva-pūjāyām*,’ Patañjali in his *Mahābhāshya* quotes a verse evidently from the *Rāmāyaṇa* then extant: ‘See in this army of Vānaras, amid the many

lying senseless, there is one that is wide awake, and prays (*upatishthate*) to the Sun'. 'No, don't think this one is conscious, he too is like us, and it is only his monkey-nature (*kāpeyam*) that makes him bow his head (*upatishthati*) before the Sun.' This verse is not to be found in the *Yuddha Kāṇḍa* of Vālmīki as we have it now. There is every reason to believe that Patañjali was Pushyamitra's *adhvaryu*-priest and therefore a contemporary of Kālidāsa I. Kauṭilya was the minister of the great Chandragupta Maurya, and it is not unlikely that Bhāsa's *Rājasimha* whose imperial umbrella shadowed the earth right up to the seas (*Scapna Nātaka*, Anka 6, verse 19) was one of the three great Maurya Emperors.

VALMIKI AND HIS GEOGRAPHY, *prima facie*
RELIABLE

There are, again, a number of facts which suggest that Vālmīki wrote an impartial *Itihāsa*, and was a great lover of truth. In *Ayodhya*, Sarga 18, verse 6, the poet says, Daśaratha looked black in the face 'like a R̥shi who had spoken an untruth' (*uktāṇṛtam ṛshim yatha*). When Rāma is exiled, he goes in Daśaratha's travelling coach drawn by four fleet and powerful horses. He halts for the

night at the east Tons (Tamasā) about fifteen miles from Ayodhya. Starting at early dawn, he crossed the Biswi (Vedaśruti), the Gunti (Gomati) and the Sai (Syandika) in succession. He crossed the frontier at the Sai and tells Sītā that that was the boundary of the Kosala kingdom carved for Ikshvāku by King Manu (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 49, verses 11 and 12). It would appear from this that the Dakṣhiṇa-Kosalas (the modern Rewah) with their capital Kuṣavaṭi 'on the pleasant slopes of the Vindhyas' (*Uttara*, Sarga 108, verse 4) were carved out by Rāma for his son Kuṣa out of the Daṇḍakas which he subdued. And the Daṇḍakas, according to the *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*, had once pertained to a branch of the Ikshvāku family. Leaving the Kosalas probably at Bela on the Sai, Rāma reached Singraur on the north bank of the Ganges before sunset. So far the journey was by a royal chariot and a distance of about eighty-five miles from the East Tons to Singraur was covered in about twelve hours. Rāma halted for the night under an *Īnguḍi* tree (*Terminalia catapa*) near Singraur, crossed the Ganges next morning, and landed forthwith on the fruitful stretches of the flourishing kingdom of the *Vatsas* (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 52, verse 101). The Vatsas are the Gangetic Doab, and so far

Vālmiki has given a correct itinerary of Rāma from Ayodhya to the Doab, including Singraur and the ferry opposite. So far his geography is reliable, and that raises a strong presumption that Vālmiki's Lanka, a hill-top city surrounded by a sea, did exist. The city may have disappeared, *but the hills Trikūta and Suvela facing each other must be discoverable if they are not imaginary.*

CHAPTER II

Lanka in Sanskrit Literature

IN Sanskrit literature, Lanka is almost always, as in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the capital city of Rāvaṇa perched on the top of the Trikūta hill and surrounded by a sea. Islands formed in lake-like expansions of rivers are often known as 'Lanka', but not, so far as I know, in Sanskrit literature. Such are the Godāvari Lankas, the Soṇa Lanka and the Rūpya Lanka of the Dal Lake, and a bigger Lanka in Wular Lake. There is however a Lanka known to Indian astronomy and that is the *Lingga* Island in the Dutch Riow Lingga Archipelago extending from Singapore to the mouth of the Indragiri river in Sumātra. This Lanka is on the way to Jāva, and the Hindus of South India colonised Sumātra before Jāva, and long before Varāhamihira's time. Lingga is a largish (400 square miles) fertile island, and the Equator cuts it right at the top. The *Pancha-Siddhāntika* says: 'Those in *Lanka* see the *Dhruva-tārā* (Pole-Star), touching the Earth (*Bhūlagṇām*), while those in the *Meru* (North Pole), see it in the centre of the sky (*nabhāso-madhyagatām*). Lanka is below the equinoctial line (*Vishuvallekḥā dhastāt Lanka*)'.

It is a fact that the Equator cuts Lingga just at the top leaving almost the entire island lying to its south. It would appear too, that Quito, the highest city on the earth, was known to Varāhamihira. In the *Pancha-Siddhāntika*, he says that the Sun rising at Lanka sets in the Siddhapura. Quito, like Lingga, is on the Equator. The difference in longitude between Lingga and Quito is about 182°. Siddhas mean dwellers on mountain-tops (*vide Kum. Sam.*, Sarga 1, verse 5, and *Pūrva Megha*, verses 14, 45 and 55). Quito is the Siddhapura *par excellence* on Earth. It is 9,300 feet high with a population of 80,000 and was reputed to be an ancient city of the Quitus when the Spaniards seized it in the sixteenth century A.D.

Varāhamihira flourished in the sixth century A.D. under Yaśodharman Vikramāditya, the great victor of Mandasor, but the North Pole had been discovered long before Varāhamihira. In the *Tait. Āraṇ.*, Prap. 1, Anu. 7, the Sun as the creator and regulator of the year (*Samvatsara*) and its seasons (*R̥tus*), is said to have eight phases, the eighth or full phase called Kaśyapa circling the Mahā Meru and never leaving it. In the Anuvāka itself, two Ṛshis Pancha-karṇa and Sapta-karṇa, state : ‘ I have *seen* these seven Suns, but have only heard of

Kaṣyapa as a tradition (*Ānu ṣravaṇika eva nau Kaṣyapaḥ*). For surely it does not seem possible to go to Mahā Meru (*na hi sekum iva mahā merum gantum*). But Gārgya Prāṇatrāta (lit., sustained by vital breath) said : ' I have seen this Solar Orb (*Sūrya maṇḍalam*) circling (*parivartamānam*) the Mahā Meru '. The *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* was probably contemporaneous with the *Ṣatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, and the latter was expounded by Yāgñavalkya when the Krittikas (Pleiades) were the precessional asterism (*vide Ṣatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, Kāṇḍa II, Prap. 1, Brāh. 2) and that was about 2000 B.C. It would appear then that the fact of the Sun circling the North Pole was known in very ancient times, that it became a mere tradition owing probably to the growth of ice in the Glacial period, and that the traditional (*ānuṣravaṇika*) belief in Kaṣyapa was verified in the Krittika period at the risk of his life by Gārgya Prāṇatrāta who apparently combined in himself extraordinary vitality with a burning love of scientific knowledge. The passing however, of the equinoctial line over Lingga (Lanka) was probably discovered in the course of the first to the third centuries A.D. when the Āndhra Śātakarṇis were supreme in the southern seas. So much then for Lanka outside the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

ANCIENT HINDUS AND THEIR KEEN EYE FOR THE EARTH'S PHYSICAL FEATURES

In his monumental work *The Face of the Earth*, the great geologist Eduard Suess says : ' The Hindus have developed a terminology much more perfect than our own, to denote the superficial features of the ground, and it is a question whether many of their designations might not with advantage be more generally employed ' (Vol. I, p. 48).

A study of the *Rāmāyana* has convinced me that Vālmīki, like the old world Hindus of Suess, was a careful observer of nature, guided in his narration of facts, historical and geographical, by the spirit of truth and reason. I will now proceed to state, as concisely as I can, the results of my geographical search, beginning with the location of the Trikūta and Suvela hills, and ending at the western shore of Lake Pampa. According to the text, the way to Trikūta lay *across* the Pampa Lake, *beside* the Rshyamūka hill, and *through* the Mahendragiri Pass. It is important to note that this was the *common* route to Lanka of both the protagonists, Rāma and Rāvaṇa. If these landmarks (Pampa to Trikūta) can be identified on the Topo maps consistently with their description and relative positions in the

text, and if, at the same time, non-Āryan tribes answering to the Rākshasas and Vānaras can be found in the region about Trikūta, we can safely conclude that Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* was an *Itihāsa* (lit., 'Thus it was') or true history, and not an imaginary *Kāvya* or poetic concoction.

CHAPTER III

Where is Trikūta with Lanka on its Top?

TRIKUTA is Indrana hill, 1,932 feet high with the great Hiran river embracing it on three sides. It rises 650 feet above the Haveli or high-level plain comprising the broad valleys of the Hiran and Narmada. Lanka, in Rāvaṇa's own words, was laid out on the summit of Trikūta (*Sāgaraṇa parikshiptā nivishtā giri-mūrdhani, Āraṇya, Sarga 47, verse 29*). Opposite to Indrana, on the south bank of the Hiran is Singaldip, or Simhaḷa-dvīpa, possibly so named by a learned Narmada Brahman in derision of the brazen-faced assertion that Rāvaṇa's hill-top fort is the Ceylon island twenty-five thousand square miles in extent.

THE 'SAGARA' ROUND TRIKUTA

The *Jubbulpore Gazetteer* says: 'During the monsoon months, the Haveli presents the appearance of a vast lake.and the *Vindhyan* appears to rise abruptly from the plain'. It is highly probable, that in the old days, the Hiran, which hugs the Indrana hill on three sides, spread out as a shallow lake all round the hill right up to mile-stone 15

on the Panagar-Singaldip-Majholi road. The hill-top is 23° 24' Lat. and 79° 54' Long.

RAKSHASAS ARE GONDS

Rāvaṇa was the king of the Rākshasas or Gonds. It is likely that Brahmanised Vibhīshana and his successors organised the clan of Raj-Gonds. The ordinary or Dhūr-Gonds are known as Rāvaṇa-vamśis in the Central Provinces. 'They attach no opprobrium to the name and freely accept it.' The Gonds love wooded hills, and dominated the Sātpura and Vindhyan plateaus from their hill-top forts. Rāvaṇa tells Sītā: 'there with me, you will ramble in the forests' (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 47, verse 30). Trikūta was, therefore, a forest-clad hill. His sister Śūrpaṇakha too tells Rāma: 'You will then roam over the hills and woods of the Daṇḍakas with me' (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 17, verse 28). She next offers the same delights of a forest life to Lakshmaṇa (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 18, verse 7). Again, Ayo-mukhi, a Rākshasi, met Rāma and Lakshmaṇa on their way to Matanga's hermitage, and pressing Lakshmaṇa to her bosom told him: 'You are a lucky dear; in the rough hills and sandy islets of rivers, you will enjoy life-long happiness with me' (*Aranya*, Sarga 69, verses 15 and 16). According to the *Gazetteer*

of *Maṇḍla* where more than half the population are Gonds, 'the Gond craves for flesh, and is omnivorous in respect of it. He will even consume a panther-kill, ten or twelve days old, so stinking as to repel fifty yards away'. This evidently was why 'Palaṣi' and 'Piṣitāṣana' became synonymous with Rākshasas.

LANKA OR TRIKUTA UNDER THE RAKSHASAS AND HAIHAYAS

Indrana hill is steeply scarped on three sides, but is fairly easy of ascent on the north. The Topo map of 1912 (55.M/15) shows no village on its summit which is a mile-long narrow plateau spread out in three levels from 1,750 to 1,932 feet. It is however very likely that for nearly six centuries, Rāvaṇa's Lanka, under the name of Trikūta, was the capital of the Kālachuri Haihayas known as *Traikūtakas*. About 900 A.D. the Traikūtakas transferred their capital to Tewar or Tripura probably because Lanka was destroyed by fire or otherwise. If so, excavations may reveal Kālachuri and even older remains. The Gonds and Haihayas occupied the lower and upper valleys of the Narmada and were thus natural enemies from the days of Kārtavīrya and Rāvana.

SUVELA HILL, NALASETU AND
RAMA'S VANARA ARMY

Rāma marshalled his Vānara hosts on the slopes of the Suvela hill, north-east of Indrana hill. The two hills meet at their base at mile 12 of the Panagar-Majholi road. The Suvela summit ($23^{\circ} 25'$ Lat. and $79^{\circ} 55'$ Long.) is a circular flat, half a mile in diameter and 1,800 feet high (*vide* 55·M/15). Rāma slept there on the eve of the battle, and had his first view of Lanka thence (*Yuddha*, Sarga 37, verses 3 and 4). Verses 60 to 63 of Sarga 63, *Yuddha Kāṇḍa*, make it clear that the Naḷasetu was a mole or series of moles made up of wood, trees, stones and rocks, just like Alexander's mole from the mainland to Tyre. Verse 68 of the same Sarga shows that the mole was to end at Suvela (*Suvclam adhikṛtya vai*).

VANARAS ARE KORKUS OR KORWANS

Gonds and Korkus occupy the same forested plateaus of Sātpura and Chota Nagpur from Nimar to Hazaribagh. The *Gazetteers* say : ' Korkus were notorious robbers and freebooters. They consider a regular marriage inauspicious, and give away daughters without any ceremony. There is no illegitimacy among them, and if a girl has a child before marriage

he is considered the husband's and shares equally with the legitimate sons. Korkus are muscular and well-built, slightly taller than the Gonds. Korku is a Munda language, while Gondi (Kannadi ?) is Dravidian. Where Gonds and Korkus live together, the Korkus are delegated to the most jungly villages. The Korku is very poor and wears little clothing.'

The Vānaras of Vālmīki were not naked tailed monkeys. Sugrīva and Vāli tightened their belts before closing in combat (*Kishkindha*, Sarga 12, verse 15, and Sarga 16, verses 26 and 27). Again, Sugrīva himself says that Vāli got together the people (*Prakṛtis*) and ministers, submitted a full report of his (Sugrīva's) unnatural conduct, and banished him *with a single cloth* (*Vastrenaikena*, Sarga 10, verse 26). Even in Sarga 39 of 43 verses, where the various contingents of Vānaras, Rkshas and Golangulas parade before Rāma and Sugrīva, between *Kishkindha* and *Prasravaṇa*, there is no reference to their tails. For the first time in verse 4 of the last (67) Sarga of *Kishkindha*, we find an astounding tail fitted to the prodigiously-swollen body of Hanumān, and Sargas 67 and 66 admirably dovetail into the florid recension of Vālmīki's text known as the *Sundara Kāṇḍa*. The Golangulas are probably the 'Kols'.

ṚKSHAS ARE BHUIYAS

The *Gazetteer* says : ' All Bhuiyas affect great reverence for Rikhman or Rikhiasan, some as a patron deity, and others as a mythical ancestor. It seems Rikhman was originally the bear-totem of a sept of the tribe. This bear-cult is peculiar to the Bhuiyas, and links together, the scattered branches of the tribe.' Dhūmra, Jāmbavan's elder brother, is said to be overlord of all the Ṛkshas, to rule over the high Ṛksha range (Mahadev range of the Sātpuras), and drink the waters of the Narbada (*Yuddha*, Sarga 27, verse 9).

CHAPTER IV

Why I Located Lanka on Indrana Hill Sugrīva's Instructions to the South-bound Vānaras

IF there is true geography in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Lanka must be looked for in the poet's account of the *successful* search for Sītā by the Vānaras led by Aṅgada and Hanumān. These were to search the region south of Kishkindha and Prasravaṇa. Prasravaṇa was close to Kishkindha. From Prasravaṇa, Rāma could hear the riotous noise of Vānaras singing and drumming in Kishkindha (*Kishkindha*, Sarga 27, verses 26 and 27). From Kishkindha, Sugrīva and Lakshmaṇa hastened to Prasravaṇa in a palanquin (*Kishkindha*, Sarga 28, verse 16) and the Vānara hosts were marshalled in the valley between. When Sugrīva solicits Rāma's orders for the assembled army, Rāma naturally says : ' First find out whether Sītā is alive, and *where* Rāvaṇa lives.' Sugrīva and Rāma evidently believed that Rāvaṇa lived to the south of Kishkindha, and Rāma gave his signet-ring to Hanumān for delivery to Sītā (*Kishkindha*, Sarga 44, verse 12). Sugrīva's first, and probably only, instruction to the south-bound Vānaras was : ' Search the

thousand-headed Vindhya and the Narbada river difficult of approach ' (Sarga 41, verse 8). A month's time was fixed for search, return and report, and the penalty for delay was death. Myriads of Vānaras were sent in all four directions, and the leaders Vinata, Śatavali and Sushena returned to Prasravaṇa before the month expired (Sarga 47, verses 6-9). That being so, Sugrīva's fanciful geography of the region to the south of the Narbada right down to the Sunless South Pole ruled by Yama, may be ignored as an interpolation. It is clear however that the Vindhyan ridge ran *close to Kishkindha to the south of it* and that the Narbada flowed south of the Vindhya. Both range and river were world-famous landmarks but Hanumān did not cross the Narbada on his way to Lanka, nor did Rāma in his march to Lanka at the head of his Vānara host. The Narbada is so great and important a river that the poet would not have overlooked it if it came in the way of Rāma or Hanumān, and it may be assumed therefore that *Trikūta with Lanka at its top rose between the Vindhyan and the Narbada river.*

THE SEARCH FOR RAVANA'S ABODE

Verse 8 of Sarga 41 proved the key to the discovery of Lanka. There is no mistaking

the identity of thousand-headed Vindhya or of the Narbada river, especially when the two are placed in juxtaposition, the river to the south of the range. As ordered by Sugrīva, the search began with the Vindhyas. The Vānaras went over the range systematically from end to end, as detailed in Sargas 48 and 49. What is more, *the search was confined to the Vindhyas*, there is no mention of villages, towns, or inhabited country, and it covered only the crags, caves and gorges, the torrents, water-falls, tangled thickets, and inaccessible river-heads of the great ridge. As they entered a thicket, a huge Asura attacked them and Aṅgada, thinking he was Rāvaṇa, killed him. *Evidently* therefore, the Vānaras *expected to find Rāvaṇa in or near about the Vindhyas*.

SOUTH-WEST END OF THE VINDHYAS

Tired and thirsty, they sat down at the *pointed south-west end* of the range (*Kotim dakshīṇa-paścimām, Kishkindha, Sarga 30, verse 3*). There is only one such abrupt end in the entire range of eight hundred miles and that is where the Kaimur section of the range terminates a mile east of Katangi in the twenty-fourth mile of the Jubbulpore-Damoh road. There was no mistaking the pointed end even in the Degree sheet 55·M, but looking

at the coloured sheet 55·M/15 it was plain as a pike (Long. 79° 48' and Lat. 23° 27'). There is thus conclusive proof that the search was confined to a section of the Vindhya beginning at the south-west end near Katangi, and ending at the Mahendra-dvār, the extraordinary cleft in the Kaimur ridge through which the Kair river enters the Sihora Haveli to the south of the ridge. This section is eight miles in length running south-west to north-east and the ridge is a knife-edge.

FROM THE VINDHYAN KOTI TO THE MAHENDRAGIRI CLEFT

Near the south-west end, the hungry and thirsty Vānaras looked for water and entered a great cavern known as the 'Ṛksha-bila' (Bear's hole), whence aquatic birds emerged with wetted wings. The ridge is precipitous on both sides, and is infested by bears even now. The cave must be looked for near the 'Koti' in the swampy ground between the ridge and the rivulet that drains the Kaimur Pass. The Vānaras got lost in the dark windings of the cave till an ascetic Svayamprabhā took them in hand, made them close their eyes, and led them up the steep slope to the top of the ridge. There she told them: 'This is the *Vindhyan* mountain, here is the

great Sāgara, and this again is the Prasravaṇa hill'. It was from below the Prasravaṇa the Vānaras were despatched *south* by Sugrīva, and they were to search the *Vindhyan* to begin with. From the Kaimur ridge, therefore, Svayamprabhā must have pointed *north* to the Prasravaṇa peak. The ridge ran north-east to south-west and the great Sāgara therefore lay along the south-east foot of the Range, and it is noteworthy that a mile *east* of the south-west Koti, the Kair joins the great Hiran and swells its waters. A look at coloured sheets 55·M/15 and 55·M/14 shows that Prasravaṇa or Mālyavan must be the high peak rising 2,140 feet out of the Deori Reserved Forest immediately *south* of the Singrāmpur valley. The Deori peak is nearly five miles north-north-west of the Kaimur 'Koti' as the crow flies, and the Bhanrer ridge between the Koti and the peak is too low to obstruct the view.

When Svayamprabhā left them, the Vānaras saw the dread sea and sitting on a foot-hill of the *Vindhya*, anxiously considered the position (Sarga 53, verse 16). Aṅgada said : ' Sugrīva himself fixed the day of our return. That day expired in the Bear's cave. . . Our search has been fruitless. Sugrīva is cruel by nature and always hated me. He is sure to

have me killed by painful torture. Here, therefore, on the holy shore of the sea, I will sit down to die of starvation.' The Vānara chiefs shed hot tears of sympathy. They reviled Sugrīva, praised Vāli, and sat round Aṅgada determined to die with him. Seated on the *north* shore of the sea, they discussed, sadly and fearfully, the disasters that followed the exile of Rāma, including the destruction of Jatāyu. Sampāti, a brother of Jatāyu, lived closeby in a cavern of the *Vindhya* at the head of a precipice. Hearing Jatāyu mentioned, he came out of the cavern, saw the Vānaras, and burst out : ' Who is this that announces the death of my younger brother who was dearer to me than life. I wish to descend this precipice and learn all about Jatāyu's death.' Aṅgada boldly went up, led Sampāti down and told him of Sītā's abduction by Rāvaṇa, and Jatāyu's death in his unequal fight with Rāvaṇa. Aṅgada then said : ' If you are Jatāyu's brother, tell us where that Rākshas Rāvaṇa lives ' (Sarga 58, verse 9). Sampāti replied : ' I am now weak and wingless. The only help I can give is by way of information. As to the seat of that Rākshas, listen to my words. In an island of the sea, *a hundred yojans hence, Rāvaṇa sits supreme in the city of Lanka.* ' Sampāti then

desired to be taken down to the sea to offer a libation to his brother in Heaven. He was led down and led up again.

It is thus clear that Sampāti lived in a cave in the *southern* slope of the Vindhya not far from the south-west Koti near Katangi. It is clear too that the Sāgara was immediately below at the hill-foot. The south-west Koti is 1,200 feet high and the first swell a mile and a half up the Koti is a low peak 1,507 feet, almost on the solstitial point. Half a mile further up, the Kair is nearest to the mountain-foot which it almost touches before it recedes and joins the Hiran a mile below. It was here probably that Sampāti offered a libation to Jatāyu's manes, and if the Sāgara was a shallow fresh-water lake of Kair and Hiran combined, it was here too that Sampāti and Supārśva found their supply of drinking water.

RAVANA AND SITA SEEN AT
MAHENDRA-DVAR BY SUPARŚVA

Gladdened by news of Rāvaṇa, the Vānaras rejoiced exceedingly. Jāmbavan however jumped up, and questioned Sampāti : ' Where is Sītā ? By whom was she seen ? Who took her ? Tell us all about it.' Sampāti replied : ' Listen Vānaras, as to how I *heard* of the

taking of Vaidehī, by whom I was *told* of it, and where Sītā is ' (Sarga 59, verse 6). " Old and weak, I had lighted on this steep hill many *yojans* long, and my son Supārṣva supports me by fetching food for me at eating time. One evening at sunset he came to me without flesh. When I complained, he pacified me and explained : ' Seeking flesh, I stood over the cleft across the Mahendra hill and bent down to block the gorge and keep back the sea-animals that passed through it. There I saw a shiny-black man with a Sun-bright woman. In soft words, he begged me to let him pass, and it was not for one like me to resist his respectful appeal. I was then told by the *Siddhas* thereabouts, that it was Rāvaṇa, King of the Rākshasas, taking Rāma's wife.' *This information Supārṣva gave me* " (Sarga 59, verses 10-14 and 19).

IS MAHENDRAGIRI A SECTION OF THE KAIMUR RANGE ?

A mile and a half above Sampāti's peak, the Vindhyan ridge rises almost to 2,000 feet. This peak is higher than the Trikūta (1,932 feet) in the Sihora Haveli below. It is also the highest peak in the final thirty-mile stretch of the Kaimur between the Bhainsakund (2,086 feet) and the ' Kōti ' near Katangi.

From this dominating peak, the ridge descends in five miles to what the *Damoh Gazetteer* calls 'the extraordinary cleft known as the Katas' through which, the river that drains the Singrampur valley forces its way to the south. This stretch of five miles between high peak and low pass is also marked by two more peaks 1,860 and 1,758 feet high, while the cleft itself like the Katangi Koti, is only 1,200 feet. This 'wonderful cut' as the cleft is called by the *Jubbulpore Gazetteer*, strikingly corresponds to the Mahendragiri gorge (*dvāra*) where Supāṣva was preparing to fish when he met Rāvaṇa and Sītā on their way to Lanka. It seems almost certain, therefore, that this five-mile section of the 'thousand-headed Vindhya' is the Mahendragiri of Supāṣva, and the cut across the mountain wall named Katas, the '*dvāra*' (hole, passage, gateway) of the Mahendragiri he was attempting to block.

FURTHER PROOFS OF THE IDENTITY OF THE MAHENDRAGIRI AND VINDHYA

Having ascertained Rāvaṇa's abode from Sampāti, the Vānaras gathered on the sea-shore, and discussed the feasibility of crossing the *hundred-yojan* sea (Sarga 64, verses 2, 4 and 15-18). Hanumān undertakes the

task. He then brags in approved athlete fashion : ' This ground cannot stand the force of my spring. *Here* are these (*etāni iha*) high firm peaks of the Mahendra and from these I will take off. These will stand the pressure of my feet as I jump across the *hundred-yojan sea* ' (Sarga 67, verses 35-38).

When Aṅgada asked : ' Who will cross the *hundred-yojan Sāgara*, and save our lives ' the Vānaras were camped on the north shore of the Sāgara below the Vindhyan ridge. From his perch on the *Vindhyan*, Sampāti said : ' Rāvaṇa lives in Lanka City in an island of the sea full hundred *yojans* hence ' (Sarga 58, verses 19 and 20). The *Jubbulpore Gazetteer* says : ' The Jubbulpore (Tahsil) Haveli is an entirely flat and open plain, while the Sihora Haveli watered by the Hiran, is interspersed with hills and jungles.' *The island referred to by Sampāti was no doubt, the Trikūta cum Suvēla hill.*

In this connexion the references to the Vindhya and the Mahendragiri contained in the *Sundara Kāṇḍa* are worthy of special note. When Hanumān meets Sītā in Lanka, he naturally gives her a short account of the search the Vānaras made for her and says ' We were lost in the great Vindhyan mountain. The period fixed for our return expired,

and we sat down to die on the top of that hill. Gladdened however by news of Rāvaṇa's whereabouts from Sampāti, we rose from the *Vindhya* and descended to the seashore. I then swam (*plutaḥ*) a hundred *yojana*, and entered Lanka in the night ' (Sarga 35, verses 57-71). Again in the same *Kāṇḍa*, Sarga 57, when Hanumān re-crossed the sea, he raised a thunderous shout of triumph as he approached the lofty *Mahendra hill* and the Vānaras awaiting him on the *northern* shore rejoiced to hear it and jumped down the rocks to welcome him (verses 14-16, 18, 19 and 25).

CHAPTER V

Supārṣva's Story

Is it Intrinsically Probable ?

WHEN Hanumān pointed to '*these peaks (Sikharāṇi) here of Mahendra*' he obviously referred to the three-peaked five-mile section of the Kaimur ridge, ending in Supārṣva's Mahendra-dvār. Supārṣva, as a dutiful son, found and fetched his father's food for him. The gorge of the Kair river with the lake below was excellent fishing ground, and is moreover the only gorge of the kind in the entire range. It was only six miles from Sampāti's cave, and it was natural for Supārṣva to frequent it as his most reliable fishery.

But the question of questions remains : ' did Supārṣva meet Rāvaṇa and Sītā near the gorge ? ' Believing Supārṣva's story as related by Sampāti, Hanumān took off from the Mahendra hill, crossed the *hundred-yojan* sea, and reached the 'Lamba' foot-hill of the Trikūta well before sunset. Next morning Hanumān re-crossed the *hundred-yojan* sea and joined his friends at the foot of the Mahendra hill. With them, he crossed the Mahendra ridge and hastened towards *Pra-sravaṇa* to report to Rāma the glad tidings of

Sītā's discovery (*Sundara*, Sarga 61, verses 2 and 6). On their way however, the Vānaras entered Sugrīva's cherished Mahua grove, defied his uncle and care-taker Dadhimukha, and drank their fill of Mahua liquor. It may be added that Mahua trees (*Bassia latifolia*), called *Madhuka* and *Madhudruma* in Sanskrit, abound in the Singrāmpur valley and Mahua flowers are 'the chief food and drink of the *Korkus*'.

Hanumān's faith in Supārśva's story was thus fully justified. He virtually went over Rāvaṇa's route from Mahendra to Trikūta and returned to Mahendra the same way. When Rāvaṇa saw that Hanumān had discovered the way to his hill-top city and communicated with Sītā in Lanka, he forthwith realised that Rāma would be advancing towards Lanka to beleaguer his fort. He called together his Rākshasas to consult about measures for defence and told them : 'It is very clear (*Suvyaktam*) that Rāma with thousands of Vānaras will cross the Sāgara *with ease* (*Sukham*) and besiege us' (*Yuddha*, Sarga 6, verses 1, 2, 16 and 17).

When Hanumān made his report and delivered the token-jewel Sītā had entrusted to him, Rāma knew that his way to Lanka was the way taken by Rāvaṇa and Hanumān.

He hastened to *Mahendragiri*, crossed the ridge and camped with his army on the *north* shore of the Sāgara (*Yuddha*, Sarga 4, verses 92 and 93 and Sarga 5, verse 1). Time and again the text says, that the Mahendra and the Vindhya stood above the *north* shore of the *south* sea, while the south shore of the same sea lay at the foot of the Trikūta or Suvela hill. It also consistently asserts that the distance between the north shore below the Mahendra or Vindhya, and the south shore below the Trikūta or Suvela, is a hundred *yojanas*. To facilitate the transport of the Vānara host, Nāḷa ran up a causeway of a *hundred-yojans* from Mahendragiri to Suvelagiri. The time taken was five days, the materials used were stones, rocks and trees, and Rāvaṇa opined that the Sāgara was easily crossed (*Sukham tarishyati*). Having regard too to the Indian habit of calling even big tanks, Sāgaras, Samudras and Ambudhis, it is easy to suppose that the western half of the Sihora Haveli (about fifty square miles in extent) shaped like a trapezoid and enclosed by the Pareyt, Kair and Hiran rivers, was naturally called a Sāgara or Samudra.

There are however two more questions to be answered before we can confidently assert

that *Trikūta* is *Indrana* hill. The latter is no doubt almost due south of the *Katas* cut in the *Kaimur* range, but the distance from the cleft to the *Suvela* hill-foot is only about twelve miles. Are a hundred *yojans* then only twelve miles? Again how did *Rāvaṇa*, burdened as he was with *Sītā*, negotiate the narrow *Mahendra* gorge? The answer to the first question is 'Yes'. It is a crucial question and I make no apology for repeating here most of what I have stated under 'what is the *yojana*' in Chapter I.

The *yojana* is used in two senses in *Vālmīki*. It is generally used in the ordinary sense of four *kroṣas* of one thousand *Dhanus* each. A 'Dhanus' is four *hastas* or two yards, and that gives about four and a half miles to a *yojana*. *Sugrīva* however uses it in the sense of a stadium and that evidently was its 'Sports' sense. The Greek stadium of two hundred yards was the course for the short foot-race, and its user was extended to other sports like quoits and swimming. Proposing a test of *Rāma*'s strength, *Sugrīva* says: 'Vāli threw the corpse of *Dundubhi* a *yojan* distance, and I will consider *Rāma* the stronger if he throws *Dundubhi*'s skeleton two hundred *dhanus*' (*dvidhanuṣ-ṣate*) (*Kishkindha*, Sarga 11, verses 47 and 72). It is obvious

that the *yojana* Vāli threw, was a *dhanuṣ-ṣata* or two hundred yards, and not four and a half miles. When Aṅgada seated at the foot of the Vindhya questions the Vānaras as to who would brave the dangers of the sea and cross over to Trikūta a hundred *yojans* beyond, nine of them felt fit to swim ten to ninety *yojanas*. Hanumān undertook the task and reached the Lamba end of Trikūta before sunset. The sea was apparently dotted with hills and one of them invited Hanumān to rest on its peak. It is almost certain that here too *yojana* is used in the sports sense of a stadium, and that Hanumān did the hundred *yojanas* partly swimming, partly wading or walking, and resting occasionally on projecting hills. The hundred *yojanas* from Mahendra to Trikūta was therefore a hundred stadia or eleven and a half miles which is the *actual distance from the Katas Cleft to the north end of the Indrana hill*.

THE MAHENDRA GORGE HOW DID RAVANA NEGOTIATE IT ?

To crown all, there is a stunner in the text that Rāvaṇa left Lanka for Janasthāna in a car drawn by asses and, what is more, took Mārīcha in his car right up to Rāma's hermitage in Pañchavati. Again, Rāvaṇa forced

Sītā into the same car, and though Jatāyu broke it according to the text, it is reasonable to assume that Rāvaṇa who dreaded Rāma and was keen on abducting Sītā, had provided against the contingency of a breakdown. According to Bhoja too, Sītā was taken to Lanka in *another* car which Rāvaṇa ascended directly Jatāyu collapsed (*gadya*, between verses 32 and 33 of the *Āraṇya*). The *Champu*, it may be noted, follows Vālmīki very closely in its facts. It even begins the first verse of the *Ayodhya* to the *Sundara Kāṇḍas* with the same word.

If then Supārṣva saw Rāvaṇa and Sītā in an ass-drawn car at Mahendra-dvār, it is evident there was a cart-track just above Supārṣva, carried over the Katas break in the Kaimur wall. If there was such a track, it is almost certain to appear as a decent road on the modern Topo map. As a matter of fact there is such a road carried over the Katas Cleft close to Lat. $23^{\circ} 32\frac{1}{2}'$ and Long. $79^{\circ} 52\frac{1}{2}'$. This road is the twenty-mile metalled road from Sihora, which connects with the Jubbulpore-Damoh highway at the head of the Kaimur Pass thirty miles above Jubbulpore. It crosses the Kair stream just above its junction with the Phalku river which drains the Singrāmpur valley. Ascending the

left bank of the Kair, the road skirts the gorge and descends to the Sihora Haveli. From the Katas Cleft to Majholi (five miles), the road is metalled. The branch road from Majholi to the north foot of the Indrana hill (seven miles), is however a cart-track. These same twelve miles of road-way across the Sihora Haveli, correspond closely both in direction and length, to the hundred *yojan* causeway of Nāḷa from the Mahendra hill in the north, to the Suvela hill in the south (*vide* coloured Topo maps 55·M/14 and 55·M/15).

CHAPTER VI

Across the Pampa Saras to R̥ṣyamūka

RAVANA'S journey from Lanka to Pañchavati, and back to Lanka with Sītā, are to be found in the *Āraṇya Kāṇḍa*. Akampana, a commander in Khara's army, survived the carnage before Pañchavati, hastened to Lanka, and reported the disaster to Rāvaṇa. He said : ' Rāma is the mightiest of archers. He has a brother like himself, and acting together, they are like fire aided by the wind. You cannot, Daśagrīva, face Rama in the battle-field. There is only one way to destroy him. He has a wife, Sītā, young, perfectly-shaped and of wondrous beauty. Manage to abduct her. Parted from her, Rāma will pine away and perish ' (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 30, verses 1, 2, 15-17, 27, 29 and 31). Rāvaṇa approved of his advice, went to Pañchavati in a chariot drawn by asses, and abducted Sītā with the help of Mārīcha. Returning to Lanka in the same or a similar chariot, he instructed eight powerful Rākshasas as follows : ' Fully armed, hasten to Janasthān once ruled by Khara. Living in Janasthān, watch and give me accurate reports of Rāma's doings. *Be always on the look out to take Rāma unawares*

and kill him' (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 54, verses 20, 25 and 27).

In the text, dealing with Rāvaṇa's journey from and to Lanka, there is no geographical information except that he crossed the Pampa, and that his way to Lanka skirted a hill near which Sītā dropped her jewels in the view of five Vānaras (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 54, verses 1, 2 and 5).

RAMA'S SEARCH FOR SITA FROM PANCHAVATI, ACROSS THE PAMPA, TO R̥ṢYAMUKA

Having cremated Jatāyu and offered libations to his manes as to a parent, Rāma and Lakshmaṇa started in search for Sītā. They went *west* and then *south*. They then entered the Krauñcha forest *three kroṣas beyond Janasthān*. They then went three kroṣas east, and midway between the Krauñcha forest and Matanga's hermitage, near a deep, dark, gaping fissure in the ground, they met an ugly Rākshasi named Ayomukhī. A little further on, they met a huge mis-shapen Rākshasa named Kabandha who impressed it upon Rāma that his sole hope of recovering Sītā lay in securing Sugrīva's help to search for her. Kabandha concluded : ' Here is your pleasant way by the side of yonder thicket of flowering trees to the west. Eat the fruits thereof.

Then marching from forest to forest and hill to hill, you will reach the lovely lotus lake (Pushkarani) of Pampa, and find Matanga's hermitage on its *western* shore. R̥ṣyamūka hill is to the *east* of Pampa, and is very difficult of ascent (*Suduḥkhārōhaṇaḥ*). In it is a large cave, concealed by a rock and difficult of entry. Near the eastern end of the cave is a large deep pool of chill waters. There lives Sugrīva with his four Vānara companions (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 73, verses 2, 10, 11, 28 and 32 and 39-41).

There is good reason to believe that Kabandha was a faithful emissary of brainy Hanumān. Sugrīva was a coward and Hanumān knew it. The mere sight of Rāma and Lakshmaṇa armed with formidable weapons made him shiver and stand still (*Kishkindha*, Sarga 1, verse 129 and Sarga 2, verses 17-20). Again, in those spacious days, Hanumān, though a Korku, appears to have received an Āryan education. He was learned in the Āryan sense, and familiar with Āryan ways and beliefs. He evidently knew that Fire was 'all-gods-in-one' to the Āryan, and that a promise before a fire possessed a peculiar sanctity. He struck a fire in orthodox fashion out of two fire-sticks, worshipped it with flowers and made Rāma and Suṛīva

go round it as a preliminary to swearing mutual friendship (*Kishkindha*, Sarga 5, verses 15-17). When therefore, Kabandha advises Rāma to put down his weapons when meeting Sugrīva (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 72, verse 21), and to swear friendship before a blazing fire (Sarga 72, verse 17), it is clear he must have received his instructions from Hanumān, and his parting words to Rāma were, 'make friendship' (*Sakhyam kurushva*) with Sugrīva (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 73, verse 45).

Following Kabandha's instructions, the brothers reached the western shore of Pampa after passing the night on the crest of a hill. There, on the western shore, they met the ascetic Śabari in her pleasant home amid trees, and were hospitably entertained by her. Going down to the lake, Rāma first plunged into a deep pool known as the Matanga Saras apparently to cool his burning limbs (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 75, verse 14). He then started to cross the Pampa for the R̥ṣyamūka hill which rose on the opposite shore 'not very far off' (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 75, verse 7). From the description of Pampa in the last Sarga of *Āraṇya*, and the first of *Kishkindha*, it was evidently a broad, placid, shallow cirque lake, thickly overspread with multi-coloured lotuses and water-lilies (*Āraṇya*,

Sarga 75, verse 13), as well as floating semi-submerged trees (*pāri-plava-drumām*) (*Kish-kindha*, Sarga 1, verse 126). One thing is certain, that Vālmiki's Pampa Saras cannot be the Tungabhadra river near Hampi with 'its rapids, boulder-strewn channels, and narrow gorges, and surrounded by a barren tree-less tract of granitic hillocks'.

WAS THERE A CAUSEWAY ACROSS THE PAMPA?

The last verse of the *Āraṇya* says that it was a great distance (*mahadvartma*) across the Pampa to R̥ṣyamūka, that the passage comprised a good long causeway (*sudūra sankramam*) as well as troublesome stretches of sandy waste (*pratikūla dhanvanam*), and that the lake itself was interspersed with wooded islands full of birds of all kinds. 'Sankrama' is a causeway. All causeways round Dwāraka were 'broken' (*bheditāḥ*) as a measure of defence against Śālba's invasion (*Mahābhārata*, *Vana Parva*, Adhyāya 15, verse 14). In the *Kādambarī*, Bāṇa, who flourished in the seventh century A.D., speaks of the lotus lake (*Padma Saras*) of Pampa, 'where even now' (*yatra adyāpī*), chakravāka couples meet the eye of the 'passer-through' (*madhya-chāriṇā*) like embodiments of Rāma's curse. The madhya-chāri traveller and the

chakravākas on either side, strongly suggest a causeway across the Pampa.

The *Kishkindha Kāṇḍa* begins with the crossing of the Pampa by Rāma, and the meeting of Rāma and Sugrīva in the R̥ṣyamūka hill. It was at this meeting that Sugrīva produced the bundle of jewels dropped by Sītā. Not long before, according to the text, Rāvaṇa had crossed the Pampa, and Sītā had dropped her jewels in view of five Vānaras seated on a hill-top. Pampa and R̥ṣyamūka, a high hill and a lake, are thus important, and what is more, *adjoining*, landmarks on the Janasthāna-Lanka route. The way across the Pampa was therefore a cart-track with Matanga's grove to the west, and the hill-fort of R̥ṣyamūka to the east. The road evidently passed right under the brow of the hill, and the Vānaras, as was natural, were sitting by the roadside above the head of the Pass, watching men and carts pass. It would appear therefore that as the asses plodded up the steep ascent, Sītā secured her jewels in her upper garment of yellow silk, and dropped them right in front of the Vānaras, unnoticed by Rāvaṇa (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 54, verses 1-3). It is thus clear that *both Rāvaṇa and Rāma crossed the Pampa and passed by the R̥ṣyamūka hill.*

The production, therefore, of Sītā's jewels by Sugrīva at R̥ṣyamūka, is a turning point in the epic, as it furnished conclusive evidence of the fact of abduction as well as the track of her Rākshasa Captor. My faith in Vālmīki as a truthful historian, had its root in verse 6 of Sarga 18 of the *Ayōdhya*. Forced by a prior promise to go back on his promise to crown Rāma, Daṣaratha, says Vālmīki, looked 'like the Sun eclipsed, and a *R̥ṣi* who had spoken an untruth' (*Uktānṛtam R̥shim yatha*). My faith was strengthened when I found on a reference to coloured Topo-sheets 55·M/15 and 55·M/14, that Vālmīki's south-west 'Koti' of the Vindhyan, corresponded unmistakably to the abrupt south-west end of the Kaimur-Vindhyan near Katangi, and that the Mahendra-dvār where Supārṣva met Rāvaṇa, corresponded to the 'wonderful cut' known as the 'Katas Cleft' where the Kair river breaks right through the Kaimur ridge eight miles above its Katangi end.

CHAPTER VII

Ṛṣyamūka to Mahendra-dvār

WHILE Vālmīki's account of Rāma's movements from Janasthān to Prasravaṇa reads like a genuine diary, there is nothing in it to fix the actual position of Pampa, Ṛṣyamūka, Kishkindha and Prasravaṇa. The text however enables us to glean a number of suggestive facts in regard to the position and physical features of the tract of country intervening Ṛṣyamūka and Mahendra. Rāvaṇa crossed the Pampa, skirted Ṛṣyamūka, and went to Mahendra. The west to east road across the Pampa must, therefore, have run on, probably eastward, to Mahendra. Sugrīva saw Rāvaṇa's chariot pass below the Ṛṣyamūka. He was familiar with the country round Ṛṣyamūka including the Pampa cirque to the west, as well as Kishkindha, his old home, probably to the east. He knew therefore the lie of Rāvaṇa's track for some distance beyond the Ṛṣyamūka hill. Rāma too, may have verified Sugrīva's information, by the trail of Rāvaṇa's chariot in the immediate vicinity of the hill. As for Rāma, he halted at Ṛṣyamūka with Sugrīva and assassinated Vāli in front of Kishkindha, a great, well-wooded, and

well-watered, *hollow amid hills* (*Kishkindha*, Sarga 33, verses 4, 5 and 7), which served as the home of the Vānaras and contained their capital city. Kishkindha was not far from Ṛṣyamūka. Sugrīva and Rāma went twice to Kishkindha in the course of a day. After his first bout, Sugrīva ran back to Ṛṣyamūka severely punished, but went again to Kishkindha with a garland of rose-coloured *Argyreas* (elephant-creeper) to enable Rāma to distinguish him from Vāli. Having killed Vāli and enthroned Sugrīva, Rāma halts for the four rainy months (*Ashāḍha* to *Kārtika*) on the top of the Prasravaṇa hill, Prasravaṇa being generic for a high circular ridge giving rise to a number of hill-streams. This hill was close to Kishkindha. Rāma says: '*Not far from here* is Kishkindha amid picturesque woods, whence the sounds of music, vocal and instrumental, reach us. Sugrīva is evidently enjoying himself' (*Kishkindha*, Sarga 27, verses 26-28). Kishkindha and Prasravaṇa were thus close to each other and not far from Ṛṣyamūka. Ṛṣyamūka and Prasravaṇa were high hills, while Kishkindha was a world-famous (*lōka-viśruta*) gorge, hollow, or cave, amid hills (*Giri-guha*, *Giri-gaḥvara*, *Giri-saṃkṛata*). Vālmīki refers to certain special features of the wild wooded terrain

connecting these great landmarks, and these are easily recognised in the coloured Topo-sheets 55·M/14 and 55·M/15. Again, Rāma goes from R̥ṣyamūka to Kishkindha and Prasravaṇa. Later on, he goes *from Prās-ravaṇa to Mahendra*, after Hanumān returns *to Prasravaṇa through Mahendra* with news of Sītā's discovery. Further, Rāvaṇa drove straight in his ass-drawn chariot from *R̥ṣyamūka to Mahendra and on to Lanka*. It is reasonable, therefore, to suppose that the west to east road across the Pampa stretched beyond R̥ṣyamūka to Mahendra, and that Kishkindha and Prasravaṇa abutted on this road on either side of it. A look at sheets 55·M/10 and 55·M/14 fully supports this inference.

Of decisive importance, however, is the poet's vivid and, accurate description, of the southern section of the Vindhya searched by the Vānaras. This section being in the neighbourhood of the south-west Koti of the Kaimur near Katangi, is obviously the Kaimur Pass, and Vālmīki says : 'They stayed long near the south-west end of the Vindhya. It was an extensive tract full of swamps and hollows, and most difficult to explore' (*Saḥi deśo durānveshyo guhā-gahanavān mahān*) (*Kishkindha*, Sarga 50, verse 4). Hanumān

searched all over the mountain (*parvatam*). Having explored the southern region *surrounded by a network of hills (giri-jālāvritam)*, they grew tired, hungry and thirsty. Looking for water, they found, surrounded by trees and creepers, a wide hole, difficult of approach, and known as *Riksha-bila* (Bear's hole). This description is faithfully reflected on the face of Topo-map 55·M/15, and agrees with the *Gazetteer* description of the western or Bhanrer side of the Pass close to Katangi.

KATANGI AND THE KAIMUR PASS

Katangi (Long. 79° 47'; Lat. 23° 26' 30") is at the foot of the Bhanrer hills, a mile and a half north of the Hiran river, and a mile west of the abrupt south-west end of the Kaimur range. It is near Katangi the strike of the Kaimur ridge is displaced, and the Vindhyan is re-aligned under the name of the Bhanrer. South-west of Katangi, the Bhanrer, like the Kaimur, is 'a single ridge, abrupt and lofty,' with the Hiran river flowing along its base (*vide* sheet 55·M/11). But near Katangi itself, 'it becomes a *confused mass of hills over hills*, 2,000 to 2,500 feet high'. It is here '*an extensive plateau occurs*, 2,000 feet high, and on it are situate *a number of Gond villages*'. The

description of the Bhanrer near Katangi corresponds closely to Vālmīki's description of the ' *extensive* region surrounded by a network of hills ' near the south-west Koti of the Vindhyan (*Kishkindha*, Sarga 50, verses 3, 4 and 7). It is significant too, that in the course of their search, the Vānaras met a huge *Asura* whom Aṅgada took to be *Rāvaṇa* and felled to the ground (*Kishkindha*, Sarga 48, verses 19-21). It looks, therefore, as if the extensive high-level plateau adjoining the western or Bhanrer wall of the Kaimur Pass, was settled by the Gonds or Rākshasas as far back as the days of *Rāvaṇa*.

Katangi was once a military station of the *Gond* Rājās. It is the gate of the Kaimur Pass and of great military importance, and there is a *Jagannāth* temple on the Bhanrer slopes near the village. It was probably to this *Jagannāth* Rāma referred, when he gave his parting message to Vibhīṣaṇa 'to rule Lanka long' and 'to offer worship to *Jagannātha*, the *guardian deity of the Ikshvāku race*' (*Uttara Kāṇḍa*, Sarga 108, verses 25-28). The above description of *Jagannāth* reminds us that on the eve of his intended Coronation as *Yuvarāja*, Rāma lay awake in the Vishṇu temple of his palace (*Srīmatyāyatane Viṣṇoḥ*) contemplating *Nārāyaṇa* (*Ayōdhya*,

Sarga 6, verses 3 and 4). Lanka is not far from Katangi, and the appeal addressed to Vibhīṣhaṇa suggests that Rāma raised a temple at Katangi as a memento of his victory over Rāvaṇa and consecrated Viṣṇu-Jagannāth in it.

Katangi is on the 24th mile of the great military highway from Jubbulpore to Damoh, 66 miles long. The Kaimur Pass above it is five miles long and a mile wide, and contains a five-mile section (24th to 29th) of the highway. Up to the 29th mile, the Pass, the highway and the scarps that wall them in, run N.-N.-E. Near the 29th mile, however, the Pass opens into the Singrāmpur valley as the result of the Bhanrer curving inwards to the *west*, while the Kaimur continues its N.-N.-E. course right up to the Katas Cleft. Turning inwards, the Bhanrer 'forms the southern and western enclosures of the landlocked valleys of Singrāmpur and Jabera'. The *Gazetteer* also says : ' An isolated buttress commanding the Jubbulpore-Damoh road and the Jabera Pass, carries the *old hill-fortress* of Singorgarh '. Descending northwards, this buttress nearly overhangs the head of the Jabera Pass right above the 36th mile-stone of the road. At the head of the Kaimur Pass (29th mile), the road, like the ridge,

curves north-west and west, and runs parallel to the scarp for seven miles right up to the head of the Jabera Pass. The Pass heads are thus connected by seven miles of roadway (29-36) and are both about 1,300 feet high.

From Katangi to Singorgarh is a twelve-mile stretch of highway, six miles running north, and six miles west. Midway, near the 30th mile, it is joined by the Sihora-Majholi-Katas road, *twenty* miles long. Two and a quarter miles *west* of the junction is Singrāmpur, the chief village of the valley. Three and a quarter miles E.-N.-E. of the junction is the Katas Cleft or Mahendra-dvār. Singorgarh is four miles west of Singrāmpur. From the 30th mile, the highway follows the northern foot of the incurved Bhanrer, but at Singorgarh, while the road continues its westward course *across* the Jabera valley for six miles (36-42), the ridge curves south-west, north, and north-east in succession, *encircling* the Jabera valley and bounding it on three sides.

THE JUNCTION OF THE ROADS—A KEY POSITION

As already noted, the roads from Katangi and the Katas Cleft, meet at the 30th mile of the Jubbulpore-Damoh highway

(Lat. $23^{\circ} 32'$; Long. $79^{\circ} 50'$). The junction is virtually at the head of the Kaimur Pass, and is a key-position. From this point, a short drive of three and a quarter miles to the *east* took Rāvaṇa to the Katas Cleft or Mahendra-dvār (Lat. $23^{\circ} 32\frac{1}{2}'$; Long. $79^{\circ} 52\frac{1}{2}'$) on his way to Lanka. From it too, the Vānaras descended *south* and explored the Kaimur Pass, about six miles long, for nearly a whole month. Though the Pass is only a mile in width, its western boundary is the broken side of a densely-wooded plateau, the Bhanrer ridge being the eastern edge of a high tableland, 35 square miles in extent, descending 500 to 600 feet to the bottom of the scarp. This plateau amid 'a confused mass of hills over hills' was the 'extensive impenetrable *southern region* surrounded by a network of hills' (*Kishkindha*, Sarga 50, verses 4-7) where the Vānaras expected to find Rāvaṇa's secret abode.

Unlike the Bhanrer, the Kaimur wall of the Pass is a thin knife-edge, with bare precipitous slopes on either side of the ridge. It is evident from the text that the Vānaras did not attempt its steep ascent though they explored the Pass right down to the south-west Koti of the Kaimur. Svayamprabhā made them close their eyes when she led them up the

slope, and they saw *for the first time* on reaching the crest, the wide-spreading waters round the junction of the Kair and the Hiran in the Haveli below.

Looking over the Kaimur Pass and the contour lines on either side of it (*vide* Maps 55·M/15 and 55·M/14), it is easy to realise the extraordinary steepness of the Kaimur scarp, as compared with the Bhanrer slope across the Pass. The Vānaras could not even dream of Rāvaṇa's driving his chariot over the steep ridge which they had to ascend with closed eyes behind Svayamprabhā. They were not aware of the existence of the Katas Cleft till Sampāti told them of the fateful meeting of his son and Rāvaṇa at Mahendradvār. *Till then it was a military secret of Rāvaṇa and his Rākshasas.*

When Rāvaṇa heard Akampana's account of the destruction of his Janasthān army, he realised forthwith he could not face Rāma and his far-shooting bow and all-piercing arrows. But his hill-top fort lay *south* of the Vindhyan knife-edge in a region utterly unknown to the Āryans and even to the Korkus. The Trikūta was steeply scarped on three sides, and on those sides, the great and swift Hiran flowed round it. Lanka was thus vulnerable only from the north, by way

of the Katas Cleft bored by the Kair river through the Kaimur ridge. So long as this passage remained a secret, Rāvaṇa felt safe from the enemy. When, however, the Vānaras learnt of it and Hanumān crossed the Sāgara from the Mahendra to Trikūṭa, Rāvaṇa knew it would not be long before Rāma appeared before Lanka at the head of thousands of Vānaras (*Yuddha*, Sarga 6, verses 16 and 17).

SUGRIVA KNEW NOTHING OF RAVANA AND HIS WHEREABOUTS

All this is entirely consistent with Sugrīva's assurance to Rāma, that he knew nothing of Rāvaṇa or his abode. The occasion was the production by Sugrīva of Sītā's jewels from his cave in the Ṛṣyamūka hill. Having sworn eternal fidelity before the Sacred Fire, Rāma solemnly declared : ' I will kill Vāli who took your wife. This very day, you will see him lie lifeless on the ground, pierced by my deadly arrows.' Sugrīva rejoiced when Rāma promised to kill Vāli and said : ' This Hanumān, my best adviser, tells me your wife was abducted by a Rakshas. I believe it was your wife whom I saw one day, as she was being carried away by a wicked Rakshas. Seeing me seated on the ledge, she dropped her uppercloth with some jewels. I will fetch

them for your inspection.' Rāma examined the garment and the jewels, exclaimed, 'O my Sītā', and collapsed weeping. He then asked Sugrīva : 'Tell me, *which way she was taken, and where that Rakshas lives*, who has brought this great calamity on me.' Sugrīva replied : 'I have no idea where that wicked Rakshas lives. Nor do I know anything of the prowess, resources or parentage of that low-born wretch. But I will put forth my best efforts to enable you to recover Maithili' (*Kishkindha*, Sarga 6, verses 24 and 25 and Sarga 7, verses 2 and 3).

CHAPTER VIII

The Identity of R̥ṣyamūka with Singorgarh

FROM the road-junction near the 30th mile of the highway, Rāvaṇa drove three and a quarter miles *E.-N.-E.* to the Katas Cleft or Mahendra-dvār which gave access to Lanka. This section of three and a quarter miles, it may be presumed, was an unbeaten inconspicuous track in the olden days. From the 30th mile too, the south-bound Vānaras descended *south*, and searched the Kaimur Pass and the high plateau to its west, right down to Katangi and the Kaimur 'Koti', *on either side of the highway*. The search, though long and arduous, proved fruitless, and the Rākshasa whom Aṅgada killed and whom they took to be Rāvaṇa, proved to be someone else. From the 30th mile again, there is even now, neither road nor cart-track branching towards the *north*. The highway runs *W.-N.-W.* for two and a quarter miles to Singrāmpur and thence due *west* for four miles to the foot of the Singorgarh hill at the *head* of the Jabera Pass 1,300 feet high. Along this stretch of six miles (30-36), the road is roughly paralleled, immediately

to the south, by the incurved Bhanrer ridge, which is crowned, above the 36th mile, by the dominating peak of Singorgarh 2,100 feet high.

It seems almost obvious in the circumstances that, journeying in his ass-drawn car with Sītā, Rāvaṇa drove west to east along the highway, from the foot of the Singorgarh hill at the 36th mile to the parting of the ways at the 30th mile, a mile above the head of the Kaimur Pass. If this is so, the conclusion is irresistible that the Ṛṣyamūka hill which Rāvaṇa skirted as he hastened towards Lanka, and at whose foot Sītā dropped her bundle of jewels, is identical with the Singorgarh hill rising abruptly above the Jabera Pass.

Singorgarh is a conspicuous landmark. It rises to the *east* of the Jabera basin and corresponds strikingly to the Ṛṣyamūka hill as described by Kabandha. As however, it rose according to the text, from the *eastern shore* of the Pampa Lake, and both Rāvaṇa and Rāma crossed the Pampa before reaching Ṛṣyamūka, the identification of Ṛṣyamūka with Singorgarh will not hold, unless the great and shallow lotus-lake of Pampa can be located in the Jabera hollow between hills, about 36 square miles in extent.

As described by Kabandha, R̥ṣyamūka with its flowering trees rose to the *east* of the Pampa, whereas Matanga's secluded hermitage lay on the *western* shore of the lake. R̥ṣyamūka was 'very difficult of ascent' (*Suduḥkkhārōhaṇaḥ*) and was 'carved' (*vinirmitaḥ*) by Brahma in the olden days, and that suggests it was an impregnable hill-fortress. Kabandha concludes: 'There is a great cave in the hill concealed by a rock. At its eastern opening there is a great pool of chill waters. *There* lives Sugrīva with his four Vānara companions (*Aranya*, Sarga 73, verses 27, 31, 39 and 40).

SINGORGARH IS R̥ṢYAMUKA AND LAKE
PAMPA IS NOW THE JABERA BASIN

Under 'Singorgarh', the *Damoh Gazetteer* says: 'A hill-fort in *Government forest*, four miles from the village of Singrāmpur on the Jubbulpore-Damoh road. The fort commands the Jabera Pass giving access to the road between the Bhanrer and Kaimur ranges. *West* of Singorgarh, it is said, *there was formerly a great lake* filling a circular basin in the hills with an area of 35 square miles; and 28 villages now stand on this area....At the close of the fifteenth century, Dalapt Sa, the *Gond* Rāja of *Garha-Manḍla*, removed his

capital from Garha near Jubbulpore to Singorgarh. He died, leaving his widow the beautiful Chandel Princess Rāṇi Durgāvati, as regent of his kingdom. In 1564, her territories were invaded by the Moghal Viceroy, Asaf Khan. Durgāvati met the Imperial army on the wide plain of Singrāmpur, four miles from Singorgarh, and was defeated. She was again defeated and killed near Maṇḍla.' (The *Narasimpur Gazetteer* says she plunged a dagger into her own breast and killed herself.) 'The fort of Singorgarh is said to have undergone a siege of nine months by Aurangzeb. Its citadel or inner fort, is on a *high central hill*.' This hill is 1,889 feet high and Kabandha appropriately describes it as '*Suduhkhārōhanaḥ*'. Under 'physical features' too, the *Damoh Gazetteer* says: 'The Jabera valley near Singorgarh, consisting of twenty-eight villages lying *in a cup of the hills* is said *formerly to have been one vast lake....*' (page 5). Of the illustrious Rāṇi Durgāvati, the *Maṇḍla Gazetteer* says: 'During her fifteen years of Regency, the country was so prosperous that the people paid rent in gold *mohars* and elephants. This is recorded in the *Ain Akbari*.' Of the inner fort, little remains 'but a solitary tower and some ruined stone reservoirs' but Kabandha's

'great pool of chill waters' is still intact and shows as a striking object on Forest Map 84/S.E. 3. The pool is oval-shaped and two furlongs by one, and adjoins the citadel. It is noteworthy too that a Gond Malguzar owns the Singrāmpur and several neighbouring villages.

THE PRASRAVANA RIDGE AND ITS STREAMS

From R̥ṣyamūka foot, Rāvaṇa drove six miles west to east to the road-junction at the 30th mile. The highway and the Bhanrer both turn N.-W. near the road-junction, and run east to west parallel to each other, right up to Singorgarh. This six miles section of the Bhanrer is crowned, about midway, by the Deori peak (2,140 feet), the highest in the ridge from Katangi to Singorgarh. It gives rise to three considerable streams of which the central, called Songana, is far the largest, and flows *west to east immediately south of Singrāmpur*. It is evidently this stretch of the Bhanrer with the Deori peak in its centre that is called Prasravaṇa by Rāma and Svayamprabhā. As noted before, the high Deori peak is easily visible from the Kaimur ridge across the comparatively low western or Bhanrer wall of the Kaimur Pass.

SINGRAMPUR ON THE SONGANA RIVER

From mile 36, the Jagera Pass runs for two miles across the Reserved Forest of Singrāmpur. It then opens, near mile 34, into a mile-wide valley, and this again expands, between miles 33 and 32, into the level plain of Singrāmpur where Durgāvatī fought Akbar's army and lost. Singrāmpur on the perennial Songana is thus a fit camping-ground for a large army, and it is easy to believe that it was hereabouts that Rāma marshalled his Vānara hosts before marching for Mahendra-dvār only five miles east of Singrāmpur.

CHAPTER IX

Kishkindha, the Hill-Cave (*Giri-guha*)

Where is It?

FROM Singrāmpur to the Katas Cleft, the open plain is five miles long and about half as broad, and is watered by the Songana *cum* Phalku river, right up to its junction with the Kair. To the east, the plain is shut in by the Kaimur wall, while to the south and the west, it narrows towards the Jagera and the Kaimur Passes. On the north, however, it develops a huge hollow amid hills, which can only be described as a unique piece of freak-sculpturing, fitted by nature into the picturesque frame-work of the Vindhyan plateau. A horse-shoe-shaped hill-rim bounds the hollow on three sides, while a central ridge, five miles long, divides it into two arms and forms a minor water-shed between them. This 'divide', stops short a mile and a half below the apex of the horse-shoe, with the result that the hollow is converted into a thirteen-mile long semi-circular valley, with an average width of one and a half miles. The western arm drains into the Songana, two miles E.-N.-E. of Singrāmpur, while the eastern arm drains into the Kair a mile north

of the Katas Cleft. The slope from apex to base of the horse-shoe is exceedingly gentle, being only *fifty* feet (1,350 feet to 1,300) in *six miles*, and both arms open into the Singrāmpur plain to the south. This wonderful twenty-square-mile valley shaped like an inverted U, is fairly open, well-wooded and well-watered, and now contains twenty villages. Abounding in Mahua trees, it was naturally an ideal home-land for the Korkus, and could easily accommodate and maintain myriads of that primitive race. But this great and open valley cannot be the Kishkindha or *Giri-guha* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Its western mouth nearest to Singrāmpur and Singorgarh, is over a mile in width, and there is no constriction anywhere in the valley reducing its width to less than a mile.

In the *Kishkindhā Kāṇḍa*, Kishkindha is called a *Guha* (cave), *Gaḥvara* (cavern), or *San̐kaṭa* (enclosure), with *Giri* (hill), prefixed to these words. In the *Yuddha Kāṇḍa*, again, Sugrīva is said to rule 'Kishkindha, the cave of the thickets' (*Guhām sa-gahana-drumām*) (Sarga 28, verse 30). The *Gaṇa-pāṭha*, too, of the ancient grammarian, calls 'Kishkindhā', a *giri-guha*. In the text, the name is also applied to the village in the cave containing the residence of its Chief, but

this village, it is stated, was an impregnable fortress full of gold, silver and gems and containing a seven-gated palace of Sugrīva comparable to Mahendra's palace in *Svarga* (*Kishkindhā*, Sarga 33, verses 8-18). *Per contra*, there is Vāli's description of himself and his people as he lay dying before the entrance to the Kishkindha passage. That shows that like most Korkus even to-day, the Vānaras were indifferent to gold, silver and tillage. They loved to roam over the woods (*vanacharas*), and lived on forest produce (*Kishkindhā*, Sarga 17, verses 28 and 29). Like the Korkus too, the Vānaras, including Hanumān and Jāmbavan, not to speak of Sugrīva, were madly fond of Mahua liquor. For it, they trespassed into the jealously-guarded Mahua grove of Sugrīva, though they dreaded cruel Sugrīva more than death. They defied uncle Dadhimukha, and fought him and his ' *Vanapālas* ' (Grove-guardians) with the only weapons they knew, hands and feet, nails and teeth, and stones and branches of trees. Their drunken pranks are vividly described in Sargas 61 and 62 of the *Sundara Kāṇḍa*, which contain excellent material for an effective Prohibition film. Ignoring then the imaginary city and the seven-gated palace therein, we may now proceed to locate the

hill-cave with its outlet to the Singrāmpur plain. In Sarga 33, verse 1, the poet, it may be noted, characterises the cave as 'dreadful' (*ghora*).

KISHKINDHA-DVĀR

A '*dvār*' or passage, frequently referred to as the 'Kishkindha-dvār', led to the mouth of the cave. '*Dvār*' implies a *narrow* passage, as in Mahendra-dvār. There is nothing to suggest that there was a door or other barrier to close it, either at the exit to the Singrāmpur plain, or at the entrance to the great (*mahati*) and inaccessible (*ḍurga*) cave. Vāli was the fearless champion pugilist of his age, and it was from the outer end of the *dvār*, that challenges to come out and fight, were roared *in* by rivals like Māyāvi, Dundubhi and Sugrīva. The challenges were evidently quite audible within, as Vāli always emerged promptly from the cave in response (*Nirjagāma*, *nishpapāta*, *niṣchakraṁ*, *nissritah*). That being so, the distance from the outlet of the *dvār* to Vāli's place in the cave was probably well within half a mile and the 'inaccessibility' of the 'great' cave was apparently due to the impenetrability of the *dvār* or passage.

THE VALI-SUGRIVA COMBAT

VALI'S DEATH AND CREMATION

THE PARTING OF RAMA AND SUGRIVA

According to the text, there was a thick forest (*gahanam vanam*) near the Kishkindha outlet, where Rāma concealed himself to ensure a steady aim at Vāli's chest, while Sugrīva was engaging Vāli at fisticuffs in the open plain. Rāma did so on both the occasions he followed Sugrīva from Ṛṣyamūka to Kishkindha (*Kishkindhā*, Sarga 12, verse 14, and Sarga 14, verse 1). Again, there was a great forest (*mahā-vanam*) all the way from Ṛṣyamūka to Kishkindha, into which Sugrīva escaped when battered and pursued by Vāli (*Kishkindhā*, Sarga 12, verse 22). When Vāli expired and lay a corpse before the *dvār*, Rāma said : ' the wail of the living will not help the dead. Cease mourning and arrange for the disposal of the dead.' Tāṁ promptly entered the cave (*praviveṣa guhām śīghram*) and came out with a bier borne by powerful Vānaras. The bier was taken to a hill-stream (*giri-nadi*) and in a sand-bank surrounded by water, a funeral pile was raised and Vāli placed on it. Aṅgada set the pyre on fire, and went round his father bound on his long last journey. Led by Aṅgada, all of them offered libations to the manes

of Vāli. The great Vānaras then stood humbly round Sugrīva, *whose clothes were yet wet*, while Hanumān addressed Rāma as follows: "By your favour, Sugrīva has secured this great kingdom of his ancestors. It is fit you should enter '*this hill cave*' (*imām giri-guham*), associate with Sugrīva, and gladden the Vānaras" (*Kishkindhā*, Sarga 36, verses 4 and 7). Rāma replied: "During my exile, I may not enter town or village. Let Sugrīva enter the '*pleasant cave*' (*guhām-ramyām*) and be crowned as king." Rāma then turned to Sugrīva and said: "Crown Aṅgada as *Yuvarāja*..... The rainy season of four months has begun and this is no time to prepare for war. You enter your fine city; and I will live with Lakshmaṇa in '*this mountain*' (*asmin parvate*). When *Kārtika* '(October-November)' arrives, arrange for the attack on Rāvaṇa. Let this be the understanding between us. You may enter your home (*Svam ālayam*)" (Sarga 36, verses 10, 13, 14 and 16). It is thus clear that Rāma and Sugrīva parted at the water-surrounded, sand-bank (*puline jalasamvrite*), of the '*giri-nadi*' where Vāli was cremated. It was then the eve of the south-west monsoon, the waters were cold and clear (*naḍim śīta jalām śivām*, Sarga 35,

verse 49), and the Songana rising from the Prasravaṇa to the south, is the only perennial stream in the neighbourhood of Singrāmpur. From the sand-bank, Hanumān points towards Kishkindha as '*imam giri-guham*' (*this hill-cave*). From the same place Rāma points to Prasravaṇa to the south as '*asmin parvate*' (*this mountain*). It thus appears that Kishkindha was to the north of the Songana, and that both Prasravaṇa and Kishkindha were within easy reach of the river-bed, on either side of it.

KISHKINDHA OR THE GORKHA-PAHARIPARA
HOLLOW BETWEEN TWO RESERVED
FORESTS, HALF A MILE NORTH OF
MILE 33, FURLONG 4, OF THE HIGHWAY

From R̥ṣyamūka to Singrāmpur, the highway runs due west to east for nearly four miles (mile 36, to m. 32, furlong 2). For a mile and a half, it runs through the Singrāmpur Reserved Forest. Here at m. 34, f. 4, the forest recedes on both sides, and the pass widens into a valley two and a half furlongs wide. Near mile 34, the road is cut across by the Kakarha stream (a feeder of the Songana), which drains the R̥ṣyamūka hill to the south. Here the valley suddenly broadens into a plain.

For nearly a mile, and roughly parallel to the roadway between miles 34 and 33, the Kakarha flows west to east *along the edge of the Singrāmpur Reserved Forest* and parts that forest from the plain. Midway again, between miles 34 and 33, the width of the plain across the road is a mile and a quarter, of which two furlongs run due north from the road to the south bank of the Kakarha. Here on the south bank, two foot-paths meet, one from the south-west and one from the south-east, both branching from the highway at m. 33, f. 7 and m. 32, f. 6, respectively. Opposite to this point, on the *north* bank of the Kakarha, is the *beginning of the Kishkindhā-dvār*. This 'dvār' is a narrow passage one and a half furlongs long, shown as a foot-path in the Topo and Forest Maps. It runs south to north *through the Reserved Forest*, and opens into a great hollow, a square mile and a half in extent, and hemmed in on three sides by hill-forest. The foot-path is a col, 1,346 feet high in the centre, between two forest-clad hills which slope on either side from a height of 1,500 feet to 1,600 feet. Sarga 31 of the *Kishkindhā* deals with Lakshmaṇa's entry into the Kishkindhā-dvār by order of Rāma, and verses 27 and 28 of the same, strongly suggest that the way to the cave

lay between hills (*parvatāntara*) from which Vānara guards could hurl down rocks and trees and overwhelm the daring intruder. The Kishkindha hollow is trapezoid in shape, and now contains two Malguzari villages, Gorkha and Paharipara. Of these, the Gorkha is only two furlongs north of the entrance to the cave, and probably contained the residence of Vāli. It is thus apparent that defiance to Vāli were shouted into the dark and narrow Kishkindhā-dvār from the junction of the paths on the south bank of the Kakarha, and were clearly audible to Vāli who lived *less than half a mile away in* or near Gorkha. It is equally clear that the arena of the combatants was the open plain south of the Kakarha and immediately below the obtuse angle formed by the meeting of the pathways opposite to the Kishkindhā-dvār. This arena is historic ground sacred to the memory of great and good Vāli. It was here that Vāli had two bouts with Sugrīva and was shot through the heart by Rāma almost at the moment of victory. Rāma was then concealed in the dense Reserved Forest (*gahane vane*) on the north bank of the Kakarha, a little to the west of the Kishkindhā-dvār, and within half a furlong of the arena.

CHAPTER X

Lanka in the *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*

IN Sarga 3 of the '*Uttara*,' Agastya tells Rāma that Vaiṣravaṇa (Kubera) occupied Lankā before he was dispossessed by Rāvaṇa, and that Viṣravas, their common father, selected Lanka as Kubera's seat. Viṣravas told Vaiṣravaṇa: 'On the *shore* of the *south* sea is a mount named Trikūta. On its top (*tasyāgre*) is the fine city of *Lanka* created by Viṣvakarman as a home for the *Rākshasas*. The *Rākshasas* abandoned it for fear of Vishṇu. It is now vacant and you can occupy it' (verses 24-28). Vaiṣravaṇa thereupon settled thousands of *Rākshasas* and took up his residence in 'sea-moated' Lankā on the hill-top (verses 31-33).

AGASTYA ON THE ORIGIN OF THE RAKSHASAS AND OF LANKA

Prajāpati having created the waters, created *Rākshasas* and *Yakshas* to stand guard over them. In the line of *Rākshasas* was a glorious king named Vidyutkeṣa who married Sālakaṭaṇkatā, daughter of Sandhyā. They had a son, Sukeṣa, whom lustful Sālakaṭaṇkatā abandoned as soon as

he was born. Sukeṣa however survived by the grace of Īṣvara and Pārvatī who gifted him with long life and an air-ship. Sukeṣa had three sons, Mālyavān, Sumāli and Māli, who grew to be fierce and fiery warriors. They attacked both Suras and Asuras, who fled unable to face them. They then told Viṣvakarman : ‘ You are the architect of the great gods. Raise for us a habitation brilliant as the seat of Maheṣvara ’ (*Kailas*). Viṣvakarman, having done so, informed the Rākshasa brothers : ‘ On the shore of the *south* sea is a mount called *Trikūta*. There is also another, the *Suvcla*. In that ridge, on its central peak chiselled on all four sides (*tanka-chchinnachatur-diṣi*), I have laid out, as ordered, a city called *Lanka*. Settle in *inaccessible Lanka* with your Rākshasa followers, and you will be invulnerable to your enemies.’ They occupied *Lanka* accordingly (Sarga 4, verses 9, 13, 23-25 and 28-30, and Sarga 5, verses 5, 6, 16-18 and 21-29).

Settled in Lanka, Mālyavān, Sumāli and Māli married three daughters of a Gandharvī called *Narmadā*. Sumāli had a large family by Ketumatī, among whom was a son, *Prahasta*, and a daughter *Kaikasī* (Sarga 5, verses 30, 31 and 38-40). Swell-headed and surrounded by their numerous progeny, the brothers

over-ran the earth, worrying the Gods, R̥shis, Nāgas and Yakshas, and *destroying Vedic sacrifices*. The Gods complained to Vishṇu : ' There is an *impregnable city* named *Lanka* on the *Trikūta* peak. Issuing thence, the sons of Sukeṣa invade our lands and deprive us of our seats. We appeal to you for protection. Destroy them and save us ' (Sarga 6, verses 14-16). Vishṇu agreed, and when next the Rākshasa brothers left Lanka with a numerous army to invade the country of the Gods, Nārāyaṇa himself, seated on his Brahmany kite (Garuḍa), met them and gave them battle. His whirling discus cut off Māli's head, explosive darts shot out of his Sārṅga bow, slew numberless Rākshasas, and finally, Mālyavān and Sumāli turned back and fled towards *Lanka*. Dreading the might of Vishṇu they abandoned *Lanka* with their wives and followers, and settled in Pātāḷa among the tribe of *Sāla-kaṭankaṭas*. For long, strong Sumāli wandered over the Rasātala in fear of Vishṇu, and it was during this period that Dhaneṣvara ruled in *Lanka* (Sarga 8, verses 19, 20, 22, 23 and 29).

THE BIRTH OF RAVANA AND THE EXPULSION OF KUBERA FROM LANKA

In course of time, Sumāli left the Rasātala for the plains. One day he noticed Kubera

in his air-ship, the *Pushpaka*, bound on a visit to his father, Viṣṇavas. Sumāli was filled with envy, and told his daughter Kaikasī to pray to Viṣṇavas to give her a son, Sun-bright and glorious as Dhaneṣvara. She waited on Viṣṇavas at fire-kindling time, *after* sun-set and begged for off-spring. Viṣṇavas said : ‘ This is the inauspicious hour for cruel dreadful deeds, and you will therefore give birth to Rākshasas, frightful to look at and cruel by nature.’ Kaikasī appealed for mercy, and the Rṣhi, softening, told her : ‘ Your last-born son, however, will be a righteous soul, worthy of me.’ In due course, Kaikasī gave birth to blue-black Rāvaṇa, shaped like a Rākshasa, strong Kumbhakarna, hugest in size amongst mortals, Śūrpaṇakhā with an ugly face, and last, righteous Vibhīṣhaṇa, pleasing to the Gods who acclaimed his birth. Daśagrīva and Kumbhakarna were oppressive by nature and inspired universal terror while Vibhīṣhaṇa developed into a good-natured youth of studious habits. Rāvaṇa practised long and intensive penance, in appreciation of which, Brahma made him unconquerable by the Gods. Sumāli then told Rāvaṇa : ‘ Brahma’s gift has made you specially powerful. We need not fear Vishnu now who drove us into

Rasātala. Our *city* of *Lanka* is now ruled by your brother Kubera. You must become *Lankeṣvara* and uplift the race of Rākshasas now sunk in misery.' Rāvaṇa went to *Trikūṭa* and sent Prahasta to Kubera with the following message : ' This fine city of Lanka was originally settled, and long enjoyed, by powerful Rākshasas under Sumāli. It will be just, and I will be glad, if you restore it to us.' Kubera consulted Viṣṇavas and he said : ' Rāvaṇa is power-proud, and is not amenable to reason. Go to Mount Kailas where is lovely Mandākinī and make your home there.' Dhanada did so, and Rāvaṇa *ascended* (*ārurōha*) Lanka vacated by his brother (Sarga 11, verse 48).

THROUGHOUT THE RAMAYANA LANKA IS A
HILL-TOP CITY SURROUNDED BY A SEA

For the first time in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, in verse 28, Sarga 47, of the *Āraṇya*, Lanka is described by Rāvaṇa himself as his ' great city ' (*mahāpuri*) laid out on the top of a hill (*nivishṭa-giri-mūrdhani*) and ' surrounded by a sea ' (*Sāgareṇa parikshipta*). It is so described right through Kāṇḍas 3-6, the hill it crowned being the *Trikūṭa*, which was faced by an adjoining hill called the *Suvela*. The *Uttara Kāṇḍa* is a much later addition, but

there too, Lanka is a city laid out by Viṣva-karman on the top of the Trikūta hill, and near the Trikūta was another hill, the Suvela. In Sarga 3, verse 33, Lanka is characterised as ' sea-moated ' (*Samudra-parikhā*). This being so, how did the island of Ceylon twenty-five thousand square miles in extent come to be known as the Lanka of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the home of Rāvaṇa where Sītā was secreted ? Is there anything in the *Rāmāyaṇa* itself, to suggest directly or indirectly, that Ceylon was Lanka and the home of Rāvaṇa ?

Range), then to the Kāverī river and Agastya on the Malaya, and proceeds : ‘ Then comes the Tāmraparṇī infested by crocodiles, and *where she enters the sea* is the golden gate of the Pāṇḍyas. There you will see the great Mahendra mountain planted deep into the ocean by Agastya in view to a coming need which he foresaw. On the opposite shore is a flaming island one hundred *yojans* in length and inaccessible to men. There you must make a careful exhaustive search for Sītā, *for that surely is the country of wicked Rāvaṇa*, the overlord of the Rākshasas, whose glory equals that of the thousand-eyed (Indra). ’ Kolkai, at the mouth of the Tāmraparṇī, was the famous seaport capital of the Pāṇḍyas known as Pāṇḍya-kavāta. Tāmraparṇī silt ruined the port, and its site is now five miles from the sea. Kauṭilya refers to the Pāṇḍya-kavātaka and Tāmraparṇīka pearls (*A.-Śāstra*, Adhi. II, Pr. 29), and even now the Tinnevely fishery is close to the Tāmraparṇī mouth, while the Ceylon fishery, one hundred and twenty miles across the sea, is a little to the south of the Manaar Island. Presumably Agastya planted Mount Mahendra in the sea as a firm jumping-off ground for Hanumān (*Kishkindhā*, Sarga 67, verses 36-39), and a convenient starting

point for Rāma and his army to cross over to Lanka (*Yuddha*, Sarga 4, verses 92-97). There is however no hill at or near the Tāmraparnī mouth. About fifty miles south-west of the river mouth, and fourteen miles south-west of Nanguneri, is a hill named Mahendragiri, 3,427 feet high, on the Malaya ridge. It may be remarked in passing, that if the Mahendragiri was at the mouth of the Tāmraparnī, Rāma's camp and the Darbha-ṣayana at Dhanushkodi may not be located in the Rāmeṣvaram island, and there is no elevation of any size either there or near Maṇḍapam on the main land. Apart from all this, Sugrīva must have known he was merely *fooling Rāma*. As stated in *Kishkindhā*, Sarga 6, verses 14 and 16, Sugrīva brought out Sītā's jewels and silken upper wrap from a deep cave in the Rṣyamūka hill, and Rāma recognised them as Sītā's and burst into tears. He asked Sugrīva: 'Tell me which way she was taken, and *where the Rakshas lives* who has brought this great calamity on me' (verse 23). Sugrīva wept in sympathy and replied: 'I have no idea whatever where the sinful Rakshas lives. Nor do I know anything of the prowess, resources or parentage of that low-born wretch' (Sarga 7, verses 1 and 2). Compare this with Sarga 41,

verses 17-25, and it is clear Sugrīva's geography is a *long audacious yarn*. Having seen Rāvaṇa's *ass-drawn* car below R̥ṣyamūka hill at the *east* end of the Pampa, Sugrīva knew which way Rāvaṇa took. He must have known that the only car-road across the Pampa and beyond the R̥ṣyamūka ran south of the Vindhya, and that was why Rāma gave his recognition ring for Sītā to Hanumān. I was therefore convinced that Sugrīva's sole instruction to the south-bound Vānaras is contained in verse 8 of Sarga 41. They were to search the thousand-peaked Vindhya and the wild, cut-up valley of the Narmadā. This conviction enabled me to circumscribe the region of my search for Trikūta hill, and led to the discovery of its exact position on the map of India. But this is not all. The author of Sugrīva's geography is so enamoured of it as to try and secure credence for it by proving that his unique knowledge was the outcome of extensive travels forced upon Sugrīva by imminent danger of death. When the Vānaras had departed, Rāma asked Sugrīva: 'How do you happen to know so well the entire surface of the Globe?' Sugrīva replied: 'Listen, I will tell you everything in detail. When Vāli drove the *buffalo-shaped Dundubhi*

towards the Malaya mount, *Mahisha* entered a cave of the Malaya. Vāli followed him into the cave. I thought Vāli was dead, and placed a huge rock against its mouth that *Mahisha* might perish, unable to emerge. I returned to Kishkindha and got the kingdom, *Tārā* and Rumā. But Vāli turned up and made a rush at me to kill me. I ran. He then drove me and my men all over the earth, and as I ran and ran, I saw all this earth as in a looking glass. Vāli drove me east to the mount of Sun-rise and the ocean of milk, then south towards the *Vindhyan* forests, then west to the mount of the Sun-set, and then north to the Himālaya, Meru, and the northern ocean. When I found no asylum anywhere, brainy Hanumān told me : ‘ I now remember Matanga’s curse on Vāli that his head would break into a hundred pieces if he (Vāli) trespassed into his penance-grove.’ I then entered R̥ṣyamūka. This is how I saw *with my own eyes* the *entire* surface of the earth.”

When, however, Sugrīva explained to Rāma how he and Vāli came to be enemies, he said : ‘ The first born son of *Dundubhi*, *Māyāvi* by name, was Vāli’s rival for a woman’s love’ (*Kishkindhā*, Sarga 9, verse 4). For the rest and till Vāli returns from the cave, the accounts in Sarga 9 and Sarga 46 agree

except that in the latter, Dundubhi is substituted for Māyāvi. Rāma could not have forgotten Dundubhi. The flinging of Dundubhi's skeleton was one of the tests Sugrīva proposed to satisfy himself that Rāma was more than a match for Vāli. In Saiga 11, as stated by Sugrīva, Vāli vanquished 'Mahisha Dundubhi' in open combat. Dundubhi inspired universal dread by his huge size and enormous strength (verses 7-23). His challenge to Vāli and fight before the Kishkindha gate and the throwing of Dundubhi's corpse *a yojan distance* are described in verses 26-47. Then comes the pollution of Matanga's grove by wind-blown drops of Dundubhi's blood, and Matanga's curse on Vāli which made R̥ṣyamūka a safe asylum for Sugrīva (verses 48-65). And then says Sugrīva. 'Here is Dundubhi's skeleton like a huge hill. If Rāma lifts it with his foot and flings it two hundred *Dhanus* (400 yards), I will treat Vāli as dead' (verses 66 and 72). Rāma flung it ten '*yojans*' distance and Dundubhi or Mahisha is mentioned *sixteen* times in the course of Sugrīva's relation. And yet the same Sugrīva when accounting for his unique geographical knowledge says it was '*Dundubhi-Mahishākṛti*' that ran into a cave

followed by Vāli (Sarga 46, verses 3 and 4). Again Sugrīva states that on returning to Kishkindha, Vāli made a fierce rush at him to kill him, and pursued him to the ends of the earth till Hanumān recollected Matanga's curse at the nick of time. This too can be disproved out of Sugrīva's own mouth. In Sarga 10, Sugrīva says: "Though I spoke soft words, he threatened me, cried 'shame on you' and used abusive language. He assembled the people (*prakṛtis*) and addressed them: 'You are all aware that cruel "*Māyāvi*" challenged me one night to come out and fight him. When he sought refuge in a deep cavern, I told this bad-hearted brother of mine, "await me at the mouth of this cave". I killed my enemy, but found the entrance closed by a huge rock. I broke it open with great difficulty and came to Kishkindha and here I was shut out by this Sugrīva covetous of my kingdom and dead to all brotherly feeling.' Having said this, Vāli drove me out with only a single piece of cloth to cover me and deprived me of my wife."

It may be noted in conclusion that in *Kishkindhā*, Sarga 41, verse 23, the home of Rāvaṇa opposite to Pāṇḍya-kavāta (Kolkai) is called a '*dvīpa*' (island) and this *dvīpa* is said to be the '*deśa*' (country) of the

wicked, Indra-bright Ruler of the Rākshasas (Sarga 41, verse 25). It is noteworthy too, that in verses 27 and 28 of Sarga 40, Sugrīva calls Java with its seven kingdoms, 'Yava-dvīpa', and these kingdoms rose centuries after Christ. In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, however, Lanka is never referred to as a 'dvīpa' or 'deśa', but is always *a hill-top city, the capital of Rāvaṇa*.

CHAPTER XII

Where was Viṣvāmitra's Siddhāśrama?

In the Tātakāraṇya or Daṇḍakāraṇya?

Did Rāma Kill Mārīcha's Mother Tātakā?

THERE is one other geographical question of crucial importance and that is the position of Viṣvāmitra's Vāmanāśrama. In the '*Bāla*', it was in 'Tātakāvana,' but in the '*Āraṇya*', it was in the 'Daṇḍakāraṇya'. In the '*Bāla*', the Ṛshi takes Rāma along the south bank of the Sarayū to its junction with the Ganges. They then cross the Ganges and enter the *Tātakāvana*. Rāma kills Tātakā and the party proceed to Vāmanāśrama. There Rāma kills Subāhu and other Rākshasas, but Mārīcha escapes. A day's march from the hermitage takes them to the bank of the *Sone*. There the Ṛshi tells Rāma, that the country was part of the Magadhas, and points out the five fine hills round Girivraja the city founded by Vasu (Sarga 31, verse 24; and Sarga 32, verses 7-9). They then cross the *Sone*, march till mid-day and reach the Ganges. It is thus clear that Tātakāraṇya was in the Sone-Ganges angle to the east of the Sarayū-Ganges junction, in the modern Shahabad District. In Sarga 38, however, of the '*Āraṇya*' Mārīcha tells Rāvaṇa,

“ Rāma is a true hero, and a good man.... Full of energy, I once roamed over the *Daṇḍakāraṇya* eating the flesh of Ṛshis. High-souled Viṣvāmitra dreaded me, went to king Daśaratha, and said: ‘ Let Rāma protect me on the critical day of the sacrifice. Though a boy, he is fully fit to overcome Mārīcha. I will take Rāma and go. I wish you well.’ In the *Daṇḍaka* forest, Rāma stood guard over Viṣvāmitra twanging his bow. Though only a fine-eyed, smooth-faced boy, he lit up the *Daṇḍaka* forest by the glory that went out of him.” As for the *Daṇḍakāraṇya*, it touched Atri’s hermitage on the north. The hermitage was a short day’s march (nine miles) to the south of Chitrakūt, and Rāma halted there for a night. It is now the Anasūya hill on the Bindhachal ridge. There is an ascetic’s house even now midway up the hill and huts at the foot for pilgrims. It is here that the Paṣuni (called first ‘ Mālyavati ’ and then Mandākiri in the *Rāmāyaṇa*) breaks into the Karwi plains. The last verse of the *Ayodhya*, and the first verse of the *Āraṇya*, show that Atri lived on the outskirts of the *Daṇḍakas*. *Ayodhya* is 82° 10’ Long., and Anasūya hill is 79° 50’. The Sarayū joins the Ganges near 85° Long., and the Sone joins the Ganges further east.

Further, the two forests were not only far apart, but had distinct origins. Tātakāvana was once a fertile and populous tract in the Magadhas but was devastated by Tātakā, a Rākshasī, and reverted to primitive jungle. It was therefore known as Tātakā's jungle (*Bāla*, Sarga 24, verses 28 and 29). The Daṇḍakas were once the kingdom of Daṇḍa and lay between the Vindhya and Śaivala (Panna) ranges. The country was destroyed by burning dust and ashes rained by Indra and became the Daṇḍakāraṇya (*Uttara*, Sarga 81, verses 8, 9, 18 and 19). It is a curious fact that on the same ridge, twenty-five miles south-west of Anasūya hill, is the impregnable hill-fort of Kalinjar, the capital of North Chedi or Bundelkhand. It is a sky-piercing trachytic (*Aindra*) volcano, and was the *Vimāna* gifted by Indra to king Vasu (maternal grandfather of Vyāsa), that he might dominate all kingdoms from its inaccessible top and justify the name '*Upari-chara*' Vasu (*Mahābhārata*, *Ādi*, Sarga 64, verses 13 and 14).* Ten miles west, again,

* *Note on Kalinjar.*—'Since earliest days, Kalinjar was the key to Bundelkhand.' For nearly a millennium, with short interruptions, Bundelkhand was ruled from Kalinjar by the Chandels and the Bundelas till it passed to the British in 1812.

of Kalinjar, on the same ridge, are the fine 'fantastically-shaped' *volcanic* hills of Kartal one of which is nearly as high as Kalinjar (1,230 feet).

The descendants of the great Chhatrasal of Panna hold the larger portion of the Daṇḍakas comprising, Panna, Ajaigarh, Bijawar and Charkari, and the Panna Mahārāja is the senior representative of the Bundelas. The diamond mines between the Bindhachal and Panna Ranges are in his territory, and he has a historic claim to Kalinjar. During the mutiny his troops held Kalinjar for the British, and he also helped to clear the Damoh District of rebels. As a reward, he got the Semaria Pargana of Damoh which contains 'Muhadra' the hermitage of *Sutikshna*. With Semaria, he got the title of Mahendra. This title was made *hereditary* in 1875, and he is called 'Mahārāja Mahendra'. This title evidently belonged to the Rulers of Kalinjar from the days of the Chedi 'Vasu' of the *Mahābhārata*. But the Mahārāja has now only the empty title without the great volcanic hill-fort which entitled him to be called the Mahendra of the earth and the friend of the Mahendra of Heaven (*Adi*, Adhy. 64, verses 5-7). Kalinjar dominates the entrance to the Daṇḍakas, and it looks almost certain that the Indra whom Daśaratha helped in the battle with 'whale-bannered' Śambara, was the *then* 'Indra' of Kalinjar. The battle was fought before 'Vaijayanta Fort' on the way to the Daṇḍakas (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 9, verses 11-13) and Vaijayanta is very probably the impregnable fortress of Ajaigarh midway between Kalinjar and Panna at the head of the Dandakas.

The Siddhāṣrama is a great landmark in the life of Rāma, as it was there he achieved his first resounding triumph as an archer. It was there too the seed was sown of the enmity between Ārya and Rākshasa that culminated in the destruction of Rāvaṇa and his hill-fortress of Lanka. If the *Rāmāyaṇa* has a historic basis Siddhāṣrama cannot be both Tātakāvana and Daṇḍakāvana. It may be noted in passing, that in the *Āraṇya*, neither Mārīcha nor Rāvaṇa refers to the killing of Tātakā. If the killing was a fact, Rāvaṇa would surely have stigmatised Rāma as a woman-killer in his bitter denunciation of Rāma (*Aranya*, Sarga 36, verses 11 and 12), and cried shame on Mārīcha for calling the killer of his mother a ' *Sādhu* '. Rāma, I have no doubt, did not kill Tātakā, and the sin of *Strī-hatya* has been wickedly foisted on him and Viṣvāmitra for a reason which I will discuss in a later volume.

CHAPTER XIII

Rāma's Halts in Hermitages Kulapatis and Gotra Ṛshis

MARCHING from the south bank of the Ganges through Chitrakūt to Pañchavati in the Daṇḍaka forest, Rāma makes a night's halt as an '*atithi*' (unexpected guest) with six Ṛshis or *Munis*, who are *Kulapatis*, or Brahman heads of forest-settlers (*Vānaprasthas*). Of these, three bear the names of Bharadvāja, Atri and Agastya. It is now necessary, before attempting to trace Rāma's route, to clear up the confusion caused by calling *Kulapatis* and Palace priests by their *Gotra*-names without any addition to distinguish them from their remote Vedic ancestors.

Vānaprastha (Forest) settlements were called *Tapovanās*. In Adhik. II, Prak. 20 of the *Artha-Śāstra*, Viṣṇu Gupta says: 'A king should assign to *Tapaśvis* (ascetics) *Tapovanās*, named after the *Gotra*'. Forest blocks so assigned were called the *Tapovanās* of Atri, Bharadvāja or Agastya with reference to the *Gotra* of the leader of the settlers.

According to Pāṇini, sundry descendants of a *Gotra* Ṛshi (founder of a family) may be called by the ancestral name. A respected

elder is so called as a mark of reverence (Adh. IV, Pāda 2, Sū. 166). Even a studious youth, according to Patañjali, may be so honoured (*Mahābh.*, Adhy. IV, P. I, Ah. 3). This user of the *Gotra*-name as an honorific, has enabled interpolators to identify descendants with their primeval ancestors and confound chronology, genealogy and history. It is clear from the *Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa* that the name 'Vaṣishṭha' of Daśaratha's Purohit, was only an honorific, the Vaṣishṭhas being the hereditary purohits of the Ikshvākus (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 31, verses 27-30). Rāma was a far-seeing politician, and in view of his uncertain future on his return from exile, secured the good-will of the influential priests of the Palace by costly gifts. The first and foremost was Suyagña, son and successor of the aging chief priest, and Rāma told Lakshmaṇa: 'Bring hither *Vaṣishṭha's son Ārya Suyagña*, supreme among Brahmans.' When he came, Rāma and Sītā bowed to him, and Rāma showered jewels and precious stones on him. Prompted by Sītā, Rāma told him: 'Leaving for the forest, your friend Sītā wishes to give these jewels, bracelets, garlands and belt as well as her bejewelled bed to your wife. This elephant Śatrunjaya which my maternal uncle gave me I make

over to you with a thousand gold pieces (*nishka-sahasreṇa*)' (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 32, verses 4-10). Rāma then turned 'to Lakshmaṇa and said: 'Invite the great Brahmans, Agastya and Kauṣika, and shower endless precious stones on them. Give the learned preceptor of the *Taittirīyas* who always attends on Kausalya with his blessings, a carriage, slave-girls, and silks, according to his heart's desire' (Sarga 32, verses 13-16). It is clear from the above that Kauṣika, the Palace priest, was not Viśvāmitra who appealed to Daśaratha for help and took Rāma to the Daṇḍakas to fight Mārīcha and his Rākshasa followers (*Aranya*, Sarga 38, verses 3, 4 and 12-15).

It is equally clear that Agastya, the Palace priest on whom Rāma showers precious stones, was not the great *Kulapati* Agastya of Janasthān who armed Rāma with Viṣṇu's bow and selected Pañchavati for his residence. They are both called Agastya as elderly noteworthy descendants of their great Vedic progenitor Agastya, son of Māna.

As for Atri and his wife, they lived a day's march south of Chitrakūt. Their hermitage was without doubt the Anasūya hill (Long. 80° 53'; Lat. 25° 10'), where the Paisuni (first called Mālyavati and then Mandākinī in the

Rāmāyaṇa) breaks through the Bindhachal ridge and flows near Chitrakūt on its way to join the Jumna. It is needless to say that this *Kulapati* settled on the outskirts of the Daṇḍakas, was not the great Vedic Ṛshi of the fifth *maṇḍala* who restored the light of the darkened sun to a panic-stricken world. He too, like other Purāṇic Atris the putative fathers of Soma, Dūrvāsa and Dattātreyā, was only a *Gotraja* Atri. As for Bharadvāja, he was the most prolific of the Vedic Gotra Ṛshis. In Sarga 140 of the *Ādi Parva*, the *Mahābhārata* has it : 'Near Gangādvār lived a great Ṛshi known as Bharadvāja. He went to the Ganges to bathe and saw Apsaras Ghr̥tāchi. A strong breeze blew aside her skirt, and the Ṛshi desired her and erupted. He secured the juice in a Droṇa and it developed into Droṇa (the military preceptor of the Kauravas) (verses 34-39). This Bharadvāja who lived in Hardvār was only a *Gotraja* of the mighty Bharadvāja (son of Br̥haspati) who saw the sixth *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛig Veda*. Similarly Bharadvāja with whom Rāma halted for a night before he left for the dark-green Sacred Banyan on the south bank of the Jumna, was a contemporary of Rāma and a *Kulapati* of the Bharadvāja *Gotra*. Unluckily it is the location of the *Tapovana*

(penance-grove) of this same Bharadvāja at Prayāg (Allahabad), that opposes the first snag in exploring Rāma's route from the south bank of the Ganges to the Daṇḍakas.

CHAPTER XIV

Abstract of Rāma's Itinerary from Ayodhya to Śarabhanga's Hermitage

(To be read with Sketch Maps I and II)

(a) AYODHYA TO SINGRAUR BY CAR

RAMA went by Royal chariot from Ayodhya to Singraur a distance of one hundred miles. On the way he crossed the E. Tons, Biswi, Gumti and Sai rivers. At the Sai (Syandika) was the Kosala frontier. He halted for two nights, one on the Tamasā bank, and the other on the Ganges bank at Singraur. The latter is probably a part of the Gangcs since 1935 (*vide* note under Singraur in Sketch Map I).

(b) THE LENGTH OF THE DAILY MARCH BEYOND SINGRAUR

From the south bank of the Ganges, *Sītā walks* with Rāma right down to Pañchavati, and the daily march ends by sun-down, Rāma fixing a resting place for the night in advance. The daily march was thus limited to about eighteen miles though Sītā fed on flesh, and was bubbling with the energy of an adolescent girl.

(c) SINGRAUR TO JUMNA BLUFF

At Singraur, Rāma crossed the Ganges, and marched *fifteen* miles across the Doab. Crossing the Jumna, he went thirteen miles along its south bank visiting the Sacred Banyan at Katra and halting for the night on a bluff of the Jumna *a mile west of Katra*. He spent two nights in the Doab, one under a banyan tree south of the Ganges and the other as the guest of a Ṛshi Bharadvāja on the *north* bank of the Jumna, close to Sihonda and the Majhiari Ferry.*

**Note.*—There was no 'Prayag' in Rāma's days. Allahabad was then under the 'Sāgara' a lake of about four hundred square miles which the Ganges and the Jumna entered by *distinct* mouths. Śrī Krishna says of Bṛhadratha and his two wives: 'Between them, the King looked like the Sāgara in human form *between* the Ganges and the Yamuna' (*Bhārata, Sabhā Parva*, Adhy. 17, verses 18-20). Obviously the 'Sāgara' cannot be the Bay of Bengal. Again Śrī Rāma says: 'Ever doth the full *Yamuna* flow into the 'Samudra' of swelling waters (*Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhya*, Sarga 105, verse 19). The bevelled stumpy ridge of the Bindhachal between Meja, east of the S. Tons, and Partabpur, on the south bank of the Jumna and shown as 'Stony waste' in Degree sheets 63. K and 63. G, is conclusive proof that there was an old 'Sāgara' which is now dry even like the *Pampa Saras* and the *Sāgara round Trikūta*. In his '*Indica*,' Arrian quotes Megasthenes as saying: 'The Ganges in many places forms lakes, so that the land opposite

(d) JUMNA BLUFF TO CHITRAKUT

From the Jumna bluff to Chitrakūt is forty-one miles. The text does not refer to any halts on the way. But as Sītā followed him, Rāma must have halted twice, and there is good reason to believe that he spent one night at Lalapur hill (fifteen miles to the east of Chitrakūt), as the guest of Ṛshi Vālmiki. Rāma thus reached Chitrakūt a week after he left Ayōdhya, and almost on the day Daśaratha died. Bharata visited him at Chitrakūt six weeks later. He was in Nāgarkot. Kangra, six hundred miles from Ayodhya, when he learnt of his father's death, the funeral ceremonies took a fortnight, and the journey to Chitrakūt with his mothers must have taken another fortnight.

(e) CHITRAKUT TO ŚARABHANGA'S HERMITAGE

On Bharata's departure, Rāma went to Atri's abode on Anasūya hill (nine miles).

is not visible where it is flat and nowhere stands up in hills.' Evidently the 'Sāgara' between the Ganges and the Yamuna was such a lake. Bhāsa and Patañjali do not refer to Prayāg and so far as I know there is no reference to it in pre-Christian Sanskrit literature. The Akshaya-vaṭa in the Allahabad Fort is an obvious fake for the Sacred Banyan on the south bank of the Jumna worshipped by Sītā.

Thence he marched to Śarabhanga's place (eight miles), near the junction of the Paisuni and *Śarabhanga* rivers, killing and burying Virādha on the way. The total distance is seventeen miles covered in two marches, and the way winds almost due south, skirting the Paisuni right up to its junction.

It may be assumed without straining, that Śarabhanga lived near the river-junction, as the stream that joins the larger Paisuni bears his name. There is, moreover, a fine high-level (1,000 feet) plain stretching above and below the junction, forming a cirque between hills, and containing a dozen villages large and small. Above all, Virādha's statement that Śarabhanga lived a *yōjan* and more away, is wonderfully confirmed by the junction being about five and a half miles from 'Biradhhkund', taking 'ardha' in 'Adhyardha-yojana' (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 4, verse 19), as masculine in gender. Here, at the meeting of the rivers, we end, as already noted, in a blind alley, and the view, further south, is walled up by the steep slope of the Panna Range. The eight-mile section of the route from Atri to Śarabhanga though treated as a part of the Daṇḍakas in the text, is in reality the narrow passage leading to the Daṇḍaka proper, and Bhavabhūti accurately character-

ised it as the 'mouth' or entrance of the Vindhyan forest (*Esha Vindhyātavi-mukhe Virādha-samvādah*, *Uttara Rāma-charita*, Anka 1, between verses 24 and 25). Total distance from Singraur to Śarabhangā's hermitage is $15 + 13 + 41 + 17 = 86$ miles.

THE DANDAKAS PROPER

As to the great Daṇḍaka forest, the Topo map shows that from the Śarabhangā junction, the road climbs the Panna ridge, rising six hundred feet in six miles, to the Majhagawan Railway Station twenty-three miles west of the Mānikpur junction. Ascending in thought a nearby hill-top, one of the many Pisgahs from which the silent workers of the G.T. Survey did their blessed work of delineating Mother India's physical features, a glance at 63 (D) reveals in miniature, an amazing landscape, *sui generis* in India. It is an extensive stretch of numberless hills, streams and jungles, walled in and defined by the Panna and Vindhyan Ranges. The Ranges run north-east to south-west, parallel to each other, with an average height of 1,600 feet, and the parallelism persists nearly one hundred miles into the Damoh and Saugor Districts. The rough sloping plain they enclose, is, on an average, twenty-five miles in width from

ridge to ridge, and 1,100 feet in elevation along its centre. This tract, about two thousand and five hundred square miles in extent, corresponds to Agastya's 'Daṇḍakāraṇya' between the Vindhyan and Śaivala (Panna) Ranges (*Vindhya Śaivalayor madhye*), and the Panna Range, like the Sewaliks of the Sub-Himalaya, possibly got its name 'Śaivala' (mossy) from its moss-covered rocks. It is this tract that has to be examined in the light of the text and the Topo maps, for traces of Rāmā's route from Śarabhangā to Pañchavati.

APPENDIX I

Rāma's Route from Śarabhangā's Hermitage to Matanga-vana

(*Vide* Degree Sheets 63/D, 54/P and 55/M)

FOR a special reason stated in the *Preface*, I have begun Rāma's itinerary at its destined end, and traced his route from Matanga-vana on the western shore of the Pampa, to Lanka on the Trikūta or Indrana hill a distance of *twenty-seven miles* (*vide* Chapters III-IX *ante*). I had previously dealt in detail with Rāma's journey from Ayodhya to Śarabhangā's hermitage at the junction of the Śarabhangā and Paisuni rivers, and have now given an abstract of the same in Chapter XIV of this volume. The total distance from Ayodhya to Śarabhangā is 186 miles. I have not yet attempted a detailed description of the central section of Rāma's route which proved difficult of ascertainment, and append for the present an outline of it as below :—

SECTION I
 ŚARABHANGA TO SUTIKSHNA

<i>From</i>	<i>Via</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>Distance (Miles)</i>
1. Śarabhanga	..	Sohawal on Satna river	30
2. Sohawal	..	Nagod	11
3. Nagod	..	Mahar Ford on Ken river	44
4. Mahar Ford	..	Mohdra (Sutikshna)	9
Total distance	..	Śarabhanga to Sutikshna	94

SECTION II
SUTIKSHNA TO PANCHAVATI, OR MOHDRA TO HINDORIA

<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>Distance</i>
1. Mohdra (Sutikshna)	.. Kota (Agastya-bhrāta)	Four <i>yojanas</i> or 18 miles
2. Kota (Agastya-bhrāta)	.. Kundalpur (Agastya)	One <i>yojan</i> or 4½ "
3. Kundalpur (Agastya)	.. Hindoria (Panchavati)	Two <i>yojanas</i> or 9 "
Total distance	.. Sutikshna to Rāmāgrama ..	<u>32 miles</u>

SECTION III

<i>From</i>	<i>Via</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>Distance (Miles)</i>
1. Hindoria (Rāmāṣrama) ..	Khamkhera R: F. (Khara's Station)	Damoh	10
2. Damoh ..		Nohta (Kabandha's place)	14
3. Nohta (at junction of Bearma and Bhadra) ..		Bansipur R. F. (Matanga-vana on western shore of Pampa)	10
Total distance ..	Hindoria to Mātanga- vana		34

Total distance from Śarabhangā to Matanga-vana 94 + 32 + 34 or .. 160

APPENDIX I (a)

LENGTH OF RAMA'S JOURNEY FROM AYODHYA TO LANKA

		<i>Distance (Miles)</i>
1. Ayodhya to Singraur (by car)	..	100
2. Singraur to Şarabhanga	..	86
3. Şarabhanga to Matanga	..	160
4. Matanga to Lanka	..	27
Grand Total (Ayodhya to Lanka)	..	373

APPENDIX II

Latitude and Longitude of Noteworthy Places on Rāma's Route from
Ayodhya to Lanka

SECTION I

AYODHYA TO ŚARABHANGA

		Survey sheet	Latitude	Longitude
1.	Ayodhya	63-J	26° 48'	82° 12'
2.	Kosala frontier (Bela on the Sai)	63-K/1	25° 56'	82°
3.	Singraur (Singaverapura)	63-G/10	25° 34'	81° 39'
4.	Jumna Ferry between Sihonda and Majhiari	63-G/11	25° 21'	81° 39'
5.	Barha Katra (Sacred Banyan)	Do.	25° 16'	81° 30'
6.	Lalapur Hill (Vālmiki's place)	63-G/4	25° 14'	81° 6'
7.	Chitrakūt Hill	63-C/16	25° 10'	80° 51'
8.	Anasūva Hill (Atri's place)	Do.	25° 4'	80° 52'
9.	Biradh Kund	Do.	25° 2'	80° 52'
10.	Śarabhanga's place	63-D	24° 58'	80° 51'

Note.—In the *Banda Gazetteer* there is almost conclusive evidence of the correctness of the location of items 5 to 9, and that the Sacred Banyan with the 'Bar Deval' or Banyan Temple, put up in its honour, was destroyed by Mahmud of Ghazni.

SECTION II

ŚARABHANGA TO MATANGA-VANA

		Survey sheet	Latitude	Longitude
11.	Majhagawan on Panna ridge ..	63-D	24° 55'	80° 48'
12.	Sohawal on G.T. Road from Patna ..	Do.	24° 35'	80° 45'
13.	Nagod ..	Do.	24° 34'	80° 35'
14.	Mahar Ford (Ken River) ..	Do.	24° 18'	80° 0'
15.	Mohdra (Sutikshna) ..	54-P/16	24° 11'	79° 58'
16.	Kota on Bearma R. (Agastya-bhrāta) ..	Do. and 54-P/12	24°	79° 45'
17.	Kundalpur (Agastya) ..	55-M/9	23° 59'	79° 43'
18.	Hindoria (Rāmasrama in Pañchavati) ..	Do.	23° 54'	79° 35'
19.	Damoh (Khara) 66th mile from Jubbulpore ..	55-M/5	23° 50'	79° 27'
20.	Nohta* (Kabandha and Mārīcha) ..	55-M/10	23° 41'	79° 34'
21.	Ban-i-pur R. F. (Matanga-vana) ..	Do.	23° 34'	79° 39'

* Nohta on the Bhadar N. above its junction with the Bearma is midway between the Mahendra-dvār and Pañchavati (50 miles). Nearby was possibly Mārīcha's place where Rāvana halted for a night. The rivers have created a gorge below their junction, and it was probably out of this gorge, Kabandha (Mārīcha's servant ?) emerged and made up to Rāma and Lakshmana.

SECTION III

FROM MATANGA-VANA ACROSS PAMPA† TO LANKA

		Survey sheet	Latitude	Longitude
22. Singorgarh Fort (R̥ṣyamūka)	..	55-M/14	23° 32'	79° 45'
23. Gorkha hollow (Kishkindha)	..	Do.	23° 32½'	79° 47'
24. Katas cleft (Mahendra-dvār)	..	Do.	23° 32'	79° 52½'
25. Indrana Hill† (Trikūta)	..	55-M/15	23° 24'	79° 54'
26. Suvela Hill	..	Do.	23° 25'	79° 55'

† There is no village on Trikūta top, where Lanka once stood. Pampa Saras (now dry) is t
 Jabera basin. Matanga-vana is to its west, and Singorgarh to its east, as stated in the text.

PART II
MISCELLANEOUS

CHAPTER XV

Chronology in the *Ramayana* Did Rāma Rule 11,000 Years ? The True Cause of Rāma's Exile

IN Sarga 1 of the *Bāla Kāṇḍa*, Nārada informs Vālmīki that Rāma *will* rule for eleven thousand years, and then pass over to the *Brahma-loka* (verse 96). This however is only a prediction. In Viṣvāmitra's account of the descent of the Ganges, Sagara is said to have ruled thirty thousand years (*Bāla*, Sarga 41, verse 26). Aṁsumān practised penance for thirty-two thousand years on a peak of the Himālaya and died in the penance-grove. His son Dilīpa ruled for thirty thousand years and died of disease, before he devised his plan to bring down Ganga and raise his ancestors to *Svarga* (*Bāla*, Sarga 42, verses 3, 4 and 8).

At a very early stage of the epic proper, Daṣaratha tells Viṣvāmitra, that Rāma was a boy under sixteen and that he (Daṣaratha) was sixty thousand years old (*Bāla*, Sarga 20, verses 2 and 11). The contrast comes as a shock especially after we are told in verses 20, 24, 28 and 37 of Sarga 18, that Rāma was named, educated and trained in the art of

war like an ordinary Kshatriya expected to live his Vedic century. If, instead of a hundred autumns, the Ikshvākus lived a lac of years, and gestation was proportionate to longevity, Rāma should have been eight hundred years in the dark womb.

Next we have Jatāyu in the *Āraṇya* telling Rāvaṇa : ‘It is now sixty thousand years since I was born. I am old (*Vṛddhaḥ*). You are a youth (*tvam yuvā*)’ (Sarga 50, verse 20). Jatāyu was a friend of Daśaratha and may have been nearly as old as Daśaratha, but his characterising Rāvaṇa as a youth suggests that sixty thousand should be treated as a poetic exaggeration of sixty and that Rāvaṇa *was* a youth in the ordinary sense of the word.

From the *Uttara* however, it would appear that even the common people all over India lived a lac of years. In Sarga 73, the village Brahman who wailed over his dead child at Rāma’s Palace-gate said : ‘My son is only a boy of five thousand years. His premature death must be due to a sin of Rāma. In *other kingdoms* there is no fear of death for boys’ (verses 5 and 10). Vasishṭha assembled eight learned Brahmans, and Nārada as their spokesman told Rāma : ‘This is the Dvāpara-yuga in which *Tapas* passed to Vaisyas. In the Kali-yuga to come, a Śūdra may practise

Tapas. But it is a great *adharma* for a Śūdra to do so in Dvāpara. A Śūdra is now doing it near the Kosala frontier, and that is why this boy died prematurely' (Sarga 74, verses 25, 27 and 28). Rāma went over his kingdom and found a Śūdra, Śambūka by name, practising *Tapas* near a lake on the north flank of the Śaivala (Panna Range). He cut off Śambūka's head and the dead boy in Ayodhya came to life at once !!!

RAMA MARRIES AT SIXTEEN THE TRUE CAUSE OF HIS EXILE

As already mentioned, Rāma was under sixteen when Viṣvāmitra took him to Vāman-āśrama. The *Bāla Kāṇḍa* also has it that just then Daśaratha was consulting with his preceptor and relations about the wedding of his sons (*Bāla*, Sarga 18, verses 37 and 38). In the *Mahābhārata*, Abhimanyu weds Uttarā when he was sixteen. In *Kauṭilya*, Adhyāya 3, a Prince's education including *Daṇḍanīti*, ends when he is sixteen years old. Then comes *Godāna* and *Dāra-karma* (wedding). A thousand years later, according to Bāṇa's *Kādambari*, King Tārāpīḍa tells his son Chandrāpīḍa : 'It is now the tenth year of your entering the school-house (*Vidyā-grha*). You entered it in your sixth year. You are

therefore sixteen years old now. You can emerge to-day, and enjoy the pleasures of Royal Power and *fresh* youth.' Till a few decades ago, heir apparents in Hindu States were mated at sixteen. Rāma marries Sītā shortly after his triumph in Vāmanāṣrama. It is almost certain therefore that Rāma was sixteen years old when his wedding took place in Mithila. When on that occasion he bent and broke Rudra's bow and proved that he was the mightiest archer on earth, Daśaratha realised the might and the glory that was his first-born son, and resolved that the Law of Primogeniture should prevail over his unfortunate promise of *Rājya-śulka* to Kaikayī (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 107, verse 3)* at a time when he had reason to believe that his senior queen, wedded long before, was incapable of bearing a son. He then sent away Rāma's rival Bharata to far-off Gīrivraja or Rājagṛha (Nagarkot in Kangra) to live with his maternal uncle Yudhājit.

* In the *Pratimā Nāṭaka* of great Bhāsa, this *Rājya-śulka* promised to Kaikayī, is referred to twice in Anka 1, verses 15 and 22. The *Varadānams* in the Devāsura War, like other *Varadānams* and *Śāpos* in later literature are a fake and find no place in Bhāsa.

It is clear however from Sargas 4, 20 and 21 of the *Ayodhya*, that there was a strong party in the Palace and the Capital City in favour of Bharata, and Daśaratha tells Rāma : ‘Get yourself crowned when my mind is unclouded, for fickle is the mind of men. This night you must fast and rest with your wife on a bed of *Darbha* grass. *Let wide-awake friends guard you on all sides. Many dangers beset a scheme of this import. The moment Bharata was sent out of this City, the time, I made sure, had come for crowning you.* True it is, Bharata walks in the ways of the good, defers to his elders and is steady, good-hearted and righteous. But my opinion is, that the minds of men are unstable, even of those whose actions have ever been just, and who shine by their good deeds’ (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 4, verses 20 and 23–27). This, it is important to note, was just before the King met Kaikayī. He evidently anticipated trouble from the partisans of Bharata and even an attempt to assassinate Rāma. That Kaikayī’s demand for Bharata’s Coronation fell upon him like a bolt from the blue is therefore incredible. Rāma was a rival to be dreaded, he had conspired with the King to nullify the latter’s promise to her father and she naturally demanded his exile in the

light of Bharata's virtual banishment to facilitate the crowning of Rāma.

RAMA WAS SEVENTEEN WHEN HE WAS
EXILED

Again, when Rāma announced his proposed Coronation to Kausalyā, she said: 'Child, Rāma, live long, your foes are smashed (*Hatāste paripanthinaḥ*). Now that you are in luck, make my relations and Sumitrā's, rejoice.' Very shortly after, when he told her of the change in his fortune, Kausalyā said: 'A barren woman has but one regret, that she is childless. As for me, I have never known the joys and triumphs that come to the Queen of a Warrior-king. My co-wives insult me, and Kaikayī's attendants treat me with special contempt. Even the few that serve me or look up to me, *turn away their faces when they reflect on the future of Kaikayī's son*. It is now *seven and ten years* since you were born and I have been longing for an end to my sorrows' (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 20, verses 37-45). Lakshmaṇa was wild. He burst out: 'Before anybody suspects anything, assume, Rāghava, the sovereignty. Who can withstand you, with me, bow-in-hand, to back you? I will depopulate Ayodhya, if any oppose. Bharata's partisans,

and even those who wish him well, I will kill. If, influenced by Kaikayī, our father has become our enemy, *let him be killed or imprisoned*' (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 21, verses 8-12). Reinforcing Lakshmaṇa's speech, Kausalyā says : ' You have heard Lakshmaṇa. If you approve, do what is needful in the matter. You may not listen to the words of my co-wife and abandon your stricken mother. You know the demands of duty. Stay here and do what I bid you. You owe to your mother the same respect that you owe to the king. *I order you not to go.* If you desert me, I will sit down to die of hunger and *you will incur the sin of a matricide.*' It is clear from all this, especially from Sarga 4, verses 24 and 25, and Sarga 20, verse 43, and Lakshmaṇa's threat to depopulate Ayodhya, that in the Palace as well as Ayodhya, it was an open secret that Bharata was the coming king. The belief was natural as Bharata was the son of Kaikayī the 'appointed' Queen. For over a decade, when Rāma and Bharata were children this belief must have been universal, and it was strengthened by the fact that the king, as Bharata says, spent most of his time in Kaikayī's Palace (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 72, verse 12). The rival queens and the rival sons were a source of danger to the king's

person and the State. As Kauṭilya says : ' A king should guard against wives and sons. For king's sons are like crabs and eat their fathers ' (*Janaka-bhakshāḥ*) (*vide Artha-Sāstra*, Prak. 13). One way of guarding against a disaffected son, according to *Kaunapadānta* quoted by Kauṭilya, is to send him to live with his mother's relations. So Daśaratha sent Bharata to far-off Nagarkot (six hundred miles from Ayodhya as the crow flies) to facilitate his supersession by Rāma. But when Kaikayī upset his scheme, Lakshmaṇa forthwith illustrated the ' crab nature ' of king's sons and was ready to kill or imprison his father, and Kausalyā would have apparently rejoiced if Rāma had ascended the throne over the life-less body of her husband to enrich and uplift her blood-relations (*Gnātis*). It is at this juncture that Kausalyā furnishes conclusive evidence as to Rāma's real age when he was exiled to the Daṇḍakas. Her mother's heart had just rejoiced over the glad news of Rāma's Coronation. Her heart therefore nearly burst, and she naturally fainted, when she heard from Rāma himself the grievous tidings of his exile. At such a moment when Kausalyā said : ' It is now seventeen years since your birth ', we can safely take it, that it was an accurate

statement of Rāma's age. Rāma was thus seventeen years old when he was banished, having married Sītā at sixteen according to *Kshātra-Dharma*. That again is inconsistent with a longevity of a lac of years. In a *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa*, however, condensed by a learned professor of Sanskrit, the first half of *Ayodhya*, Sarga 20, verse 45, is translated thus: 'Ten and seven years, O, Rāghava, since your re-birth', and re-birth is explained as 'initiation as a Kshatriya' in brackets. The word in the text is *Jātasya*. That Kausalyā, a *Ghosha* Queen just plunged in misery and despair, calculated her son's age with reference to his initiation in the *Sāvitrī*, makes my reason reel. To me it is unthinkable even in the case of a most learned *Śrotriya* Brahman. 'Initiation' for the Kshatriya is in his eleventh year corresponding to the eleven letters of the *Trishtup*, the *Vajra* of Indra. The condenser is evidently anxious to make out that Rāma was twenty-eight when his mother said he was seventeen. I cannot make out why, but I dare say it is for a very learned reason and I leave it at that. Again, if Daśaratha was over sixty thousand on his way towards a lac, it is unthinkable that Kaikayī fixed the period of Rāma's exile at fourteen years which would,

in proportion, correspond to five days in a century.

REFERENCES IN THE RAMAYANA TO A CENTURY LIMIT OF LIFE

When Mantharā tries to persuade Kaikayī that the crowning of Rāma would spell ruin to her and her son, Kaikayī, who loved Rāma as her own son, answers to begin with, 'Why do you grieve over Rāma's Coronation? Bharata too, after Rāma's *one hundred years*, will succeed to the kingdom of his forefathers' (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 8, verses 15 and 16). If Kaikayī said this, she must have believed that the upper limit of Rāma's life was one hundred, though as he and Bharata were nearly of the same age, she could not, in reason, have hoped for Bharata's succeeding to the Throne 'after Rāma's one hundred years'. Again, on reaching Pañchavati, Rāma said: 'Lakshmaṇa, where would you locate our future abode? Select a picturesque spot free of brambles....' With folded hands, Lakshmaṇa replied: 'I have no will of my own, Kākustha, while you live your hundred years (*Paravānasmi Kākutstha tvayi varsha śatam sthite, Āraṇya.*, Sarga 15, verse 7). When Lakshmaṇa said this, it is clear that the limit of human life was the Vedic century,

and that Lakshmaṇa's father Daśaratha could not have lived sixty thousand years and more.

Further, when Sītā is about to hang herself from the branch of a Simṣapa tree (*Dalbergia sissoo*) in the Aśoka Park, Hanumān providentially meets her, and gives her glad tidings of Rāma and Lakshmaṇa. She says : " Blessed, I realise, is the folk-song, ' If only one lives, happiness will come to him though after a hundred years' " (*Sundara*, Sarga 34, verse 6). When, later on, the same Hanumān gives Bharata the news of Rāma's victory over Rāvaṇa and his imminent arrival, the same folk-song (*Gāthā*) is repeated by Bharata (*Yuddha*, Sarga 128, verse 2). Again, when in *Kishkindhā* (Sarga 30, verse 64), love-sick Rāma spoke of the slow passing of the four rainy months as though they were a hundred years, his *Varsha-ṣaṭam* referred, no doubt, to the maximum duration of human life.

ṢATAYUS (CENTURY-LIFE) IN THE VEDAS

The above references by Kaikayī, Lakshmaṇa, Rāma, Sītā and Bharata to a hundred-year life (*Varsha-ṣata*), conform to the clear and repeated assertions in the Mantras as well as the Brāhmaṇas as to the duration of human life. A hundred autumns or winters

was the *Āyus* (life-time) of the Ṛshis. The Vedic mantras pertain to the Kṛta-yuga, the age of *Vṛtra-vadha* when Indra destroyed the glaciers and set free the frozen rivers. Bharadvāja, son of Bṛhaspati, with the help of whose Soma, Indra destroyed Śambara, the hugest of Vṛtras, says : ' Let us rejoice a hundred winters' (Maṇḍala VI, Hymn 17, verse 15 ; and Hymn 24, verse 10). Gotama says : ' A hundred autumns is the limit, O Gods, you have fixed for the decay of our bodies. Do not injure us midway in life's progress (*Āyurgantoh*) '. Right through Sanskrit literature it is ' let us live a hundred years'. Once, after ' live a hundred years,' occurs, *Bhūyaṣcha śaradaṣṣatāt* (and even more than a hundred years). There is also a reference to three great Ṛshis who were *Tryāyushas*—Jamadagni, Kaśyapa and Agastya—but this is to be found in the unreliable supplement beyond the eighth Aṣṭaka, though it is not improbable that a few humans lived into the third century after birth. Rāma lived long after the Mantra period and later than the Brāhmaṇas too, as these latter, voluminous as they are, contain no references to Paraśu Rāma or Dāśarathi Rāma, or for that matter to any *avatār* of Viṣṇu. According to Nārada in the *Uttara*, Rāma lived in

the Dvāpara (Sarga 74, verses 24–28). In the opening Sarga of the *Bāla.*, Nārada says : ‘When Rāma rules’ (he had just then crowned himself, *vide* verse 88) ‘there will be no widows, and people will rejoice as in the *Kṛta-yuga*’. In Sarga 24 again of the *Bāla.*, Viṣvāmitra tells Rāma of ‘the olden days when Vṛtra was destroyed’ (*Purā Vṛtra-radhe*, verse 18). And yet when mighty seers of the Mantras like Bharadvāja hoped for a hundred years of life, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, as we have it, says that Daśaratha lived sixty thousand years, and Rāma ruled eleven thousand years. We can safely take it therefore, that these figures are a poetic exaggeration for sixty and eleven respectively. There is ample proof that in mediæval times, Vālmīki’s *Itihāsa* was converted into the so-called *Ādi-kāvya*, and in a *Kāvya* (poetic composition) *Saṅkalpa* (flighty imaginings), may legitimately take the place of *Satya* (prosaic facts).

WHICH WAS THE ELDER ?

LAKSHMANA OR BHARATA ?

In Sarga 129, verses 91–93 of the *Yuddha*, Rāma offers the Yauva-rājya to Lakshmaṇa and tries his best to make him accept it. That suggests that Lakshmaṇa was senior to

Bharata and as the *Ikshvāku* family strictly followed the rule of primogeniture, Rāma could not have intended to supersede Bharata. With matted hair and clothed in barks, Bharata went to Chitrakūt, humbled himself to the dust, and prayed to Rāma to assume the kingdom. When however Rāma insisted on carrying out his father's promise to Kaikayī's father (*vide Ayodhya*, Sarga 107, verse 13), Bharata went back, abandoned Ayodhya and lived in a village, installing Rāma's sandals on the throne. Till the brothers met at Chitrakūt and Rāma revealed the root-cause of his exile, Lakshmaṇa was unaware of Daśaratha's promise to Kaikayī's father. In these circumstances, it was natural for Rāma as well as Lakshmaṇa to feel the deepest love, and admiration bordering on veneration for Bharata. Sarga 16, verses 37-40 of the *Āraṇya*, show how Rāma felt towards Bharata, and in verses 27-33, Lakshmaṇa, like the great gentleman that he was, makes amends out of his honest heart for the injustice he had done to Bharata. It was no doubt in the same spirit that Lakshmaṇa renounced the Yauva-rājya in favour of Bharata. Then again, in verse 41, Sarga 129 of the *Yuddha*, it is said : ' Bharata then went up to Lakshmaṇa and Sītā, made his

prostrations and announced his name.' That seems to be conclusive as to Lakshmaṇa's seniority, but not to an un-named *Tikā-kṛt* referred to by the great Mallinātha. Consistently with the above verse of Vālmīki, Kālidāsa has it: 'Bharata then joined Saumitri, and he (*Sa cha*) raising up him humbly bowing, embraced tightly' (*R.V.*, *S.* 13, verse 73). In his *Sanjīvinī* Mallinātha makes out that 'he' is Bharata and 'him' Lakshmaṇa. He quotes verse 41, Sarga 129 of the *Yuddha* and admits that that verse too, affirms the seniority of Lakshmaṇa and that his own comment is 'crooked' (*anārjaya*). But, he adds, 'listen to the meaning of the *Rāmāyaṇa* verse by the *Tikā-kṛt*. The *āśādanam* (approach) applies to Lakshmaṇa and Sītā, but the *abhivādanam* was for Sītā alone. Otherwise, the seniority of Bharata formerly stated will be contradicted.' The *Tikā-kṛt* evidently refers to verses 8-14 of Sarga 18 of the *Bāla*. It may however be noted that planets and zodiacal signs find no place in the voluminous literature of the Mantras and Brāhmanas. The *Vedāṅga-jyotiṣa* too, propounded by Lagadha and given out by his *śishya* Śuchi, does not know the planets and the Zodiac. Mahāmahopādhyāya Dr. Shāma Sāstry, Ph.D., quotes from the

Indian Ephemeris of the learned Dr. Swāmikanṇu Pillai, and agrees with the latter in fixing the date of the *Vedāṅgajyotiṣha* near about 850 B.C. It is thus very likely that the horoscopic verses 8-14 of Sarga 18 were added long after Vālmīki, to be in keeping with the successive imbibition by Daśaratha's Queens of the fecundating milk of the Gods into which the might of the mantra had drawn the might of Viṣṇu (*Bāla.*, Sarga 16, verses 15-30).

In the *Pratimā-nātaka* again of the great Bhāsa, there is conclusive evidence that Lakshmaṇa was senior to Bharata. In Anka 4, between verses 8 and 9, Bharata addressing Lakshmaṇa says: 'Ārya, *abhivādaye*,' and Lakshmaṇa responds: 'Child, peace and long life to you'. Again in Anka 7, between verses 7 and 8, when Bharata meets Lakshmaṇa on his return from Lanka, Bharata repeats, *Ārya abhivādaye*, and Lakshmaṇa responds: 'Come, come child; may you live long: embrace me.' Bhāsa, I may repeat, was anterior to Kālidāsa I who flourished in Viḍiṣanagar under Agnimitra (*vide Bharata-vākya* in the *Mālavikāgni-mitra*) in the first half of the second century B.C.

CHAPTER XVI

Vālmiki's Rāma—Essentially Human, though Deified

VALMIKI is not blinded by Rāma's divinity to his essential humanity. In Rāma, brain, brawn and will-power were developed to an extraordinary degree. His master-passion as a Prince was archery, and he developed almost superhuman skill in archery by constant practice in the hunting field. He won his resounding triumph as a warrior by bending and breaking Rudrā's bow, and secured supreme beauty in the shape of high-spirited Sītā as his prize. Sītā was thus doubly precious to Rāma. His mind, muscle and magnificent physique were nourished and maintained by the flesh of game, the fruits of the chase. Love of archery, love of hunting, relish for game-flesh and love of Sītā were thus ingrained in his bones, and strong-willed and essentially righteous as he was, his will gave way and his sense of right and wrong was deflected when in conflict with these deep-seated desires. His master-passion breaks out when he passes the Kosala frontier at the Syandika (Sai) river above Bela (Bela possibly means 'boundary'). Turning north towards Ayodhya

he exclaimed in his powerful swan-voice :
 ' When shall I return to thee and roam hunting (*mṛgayām paryatishyāmi*) over the flowering forests of the Sarayū. This delight of hunting is unapproached by anything in the world, and is approved by royal saints (*Rājarshi sammata*) ' (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 49, verses 25-27). Incidental to his love of hunting was his keen relish for the flesh of game. When he goes to his mother to announce his exile to the Daṇḍakas, Kausalyā, unaware of the change in his fortunes, offered him a seat and invited him to breakfast. Rāma said :
 ' You do not know the dread danger that has overtaken you as well as Sītā and Lakshmaṇa. I am going to the Daṇḍakas, and for fourteen years I shall live like a *muni* in the uninhabited forest living on honey, fruits and roots, *giving up flesh* ' (*hitva munivadāmisham*, *Ayodhya*, Sarga 20, verses 27-29). When again Guha proposes, on the eve of Rāma's crossing the Ganges, to entertain him in right royal style, Rāma said : ' I can accept no feasts. Know I am now a *Tapasa* dweller of the forest dressed in barks and skins, and living on fruits and roots. The one favour you can do me is to see that these favourite horses of my father are well fed, watered and lodged ' (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 50, verses 44-47). When he

spoke as above to his mother and to Guha, it goes without saying he was absolutely sincere. He was content at Singraur with a drink of Gangā water, and fasted for the night. Next morning, he perfected his entry into Vaikhānasa, by sending for the banyan's milky juice and matting his locks. He initiated Lakshmaṇa too, into Vānaprastha and crossed the Ganges. In mid-stream Sītā addressed her prayers to the river, and vowed, if she returned safe from the forest, to propitiate her with a 'thousand pots of wine and meaty food' (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 52, verse 89). On reaching the south bank however, Nature asserted herself. The brothers had starved for the night and were hungry (*bhubhukshitau*). Their growing (Rāma was then seventeen) vigorous frames craved for the accustomed nourishment, and tempted by the forest, they forthwith shot four heads of big game, a boar, a sambhur, a spotted deer and a great Ruru (Barasingh), took the flesh, and made their home under a tree (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 52, verse 102). In the *Bāla-Kāṇḍa*, however, on the south bank of the Sarayū, Viṣvāmitra initiates Rāma into the mysteries of the *Bālā* and *Atibalā* and says: 'These two *Vidyas*, directly you learn them, will make you the strongest, most energetic, healthiest, and most

intellectual, of men. Having recited *Bala* and *Atibala* you will never be tired, hungry or thirsty. All wisdom is concentrated in them and they are the daughters of *Pitāmaha* (Creator Brahma)' (*Bāla-Kāṇḍa*, Sarga 22, verses 12-17). It is clear that this is not Vālmīki but a recent mantra-ridden interpolator. Sītā too seems to have shared Rāmā's taste for game-flesh. At Chitrakūt she roamed with Rāma over the picturesque banks of the hill-stream, and Rāma gratified her with the flesh of game saying, 'This is nourishing, this is savoury, this is done to a turn' (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 96, verse 1). From what Kabandha tells Rāma it would appear that aquatic birds fatty as lumps of Ghee, as well as fish were welcome to Rāma, and Kabandha expected Lakshmaṇa to transfix fish with arrows in the still transparent waters of the Pampa Lake.

CHAPTER XVII

Vālmiki and Women

No *Ghosha* Spirit in Vālmiki

WHEN the exiles take to the boat in the Ganges, Rāma told Lakshmaṇa to help Sītā (*parigrhya āropaya*) into the boat and Lakshmaṇa did so (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 52, verses 75 and 76). After Sītā prayed to the Sacred Banyan Tree, Rāma tells Lakshmaṇa : ' Brother of Bharata, go in advance with Sītā, I will follow behind, armed. Whatever flower or fruit Jānakī desires, whatever pleases her fancy, get the same and give her ' (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 55, verses 27 and 28). Again when searching for Sītā in Janasthān, Rāma says : ' On the flat rock here, seated with me and smiling sweetly, noble Sītā chattered away, making fun of you ' (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 63, verse 12). When Rāma goes to his mother to announce his Coronation, Sumitrā, *Lakshmaṇa* and Sītā had already gathered there (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 4, verse 31). Again when Rāma finally decides to obey his father's order in spite of Kausalyā's command to the contrary, Lakshmaṇa seizes Rāma by the feet and told both him and Sītā (*Sītām uvācha Rāghavam cha*) that he would follow them to the forest, that Kausalyā would look after Sumitrā and

he (Lakshmaṇa) would be neglecting no part of his duty by following Rāma (*Vaidharmyam neha vidyate*). Rāma agrees and tells him to go and take leave of all his friends (*Sarvameva suhrjjanam*) (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 31, verses 2, 21, 22 and 26). Yet when Sugrīva produces Sītā's jewels and Rāma asks Lakshmaṇa if he recognized them, Lakshmaṇa says: 'I know no armlets, I know no ear-rings, but I recognise the anklets as I used to prostrate daily before her feet.' This verse was evidently forged in the degenerate unchivalrous days long after Vālmīki, and is supposed to be a gem of a verse in these yet un-regenerate days. When Rāma is attacked by Khara and his army, Lakshmaṇa was in charge of her in an inaccessible hill-cave hidden by forest trees. When after Khara's destruction Lakshmaṇa returned with Sītā the poet says: 'Sītā rejoiced to see Rāma safe and victorious, and embraced him. And when she heard the great R̥shis extol his valour, she felt proud and happy, and embraced him once again' (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 20, verses 39 and 41).

WAS THERE AN ŪRMILA A DAUGHTER OF
JANAKA AND WIFE OF LAKSHMANA ?

It would appear from the preceding para, that Ūrmila, a daughter of Janaka, wedded to

Lakshmaṇa according to the *Bāla-Kāṇḍa*, was treated as non-existent in the *Ayodhyā-Kāṇḍa*. Sumitrā, Lakshmaṇa and Sītā gather in Kausalyā's place to rejoice over Rāma's good fortune. There is no Ūrmiḷa there. According to Lakshmaṇa, Kausalyā wielded great power and influence, and could maintain herself as well as his mother Sumitrā in ease and comfort (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 31. verses 22 and 23). Here too Lakshmaṇa makes no reference to an Ūrmiḷa. When again Lakshmaṇa says, 'I wont be neglecting any of my duties by following you,' it is clear he is no *bhartā* with a *bhāryā*, and the primary duty of a *Grhastha* is to support his wife. If there was an Ūrmiḷa, selfless Rāma would surely have said, 'what about Ūrmiḷa' and not 'all right, bid adieu to your friends'. If really Sītā had a sister wedded to Lakshmaṇa, that sister as a daughter of Janaka would have followed Lakshmaṇa to the forest and Sītā would have rejoiced to have her sister as a helpful companion in misfortune. It would appear too that Lakshmaṇa had a mansion of his own like Rāma, and Rāma instructs his weeping dependants : 'Lakshmaṇa's abode and this house of mine, both should be cared for till I return' (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 32, verses 25 and 26). Further, Rāma tells Śūrpaṇakhā :

‘ This younger brother of mine is unmarried, has known no woman, and will make a fit husband for you.’ He might have fibbed for *parihāsa* (fun) to use his own expression, but if there was an Ūrmīḷa, it is unthinkable Sītā told Rāvaṇa ‘ Lakshmaṇa is Rāma’s younger brother, fierce in war and a firm-willed student (*Brahmachārī dr̥ḍha-vrataḥ*)’. In the Kumbhakonam edition it is ‘ Dharma-chārī ’ for ‘ Brahmachārī ’, but even so, the *dr̥ḍha-vrataḥ* shows his *dharma* could not have been *gārhastya* if he left with his brother and Sītā for a fourteen years’ stay in the jungle. If Vālmīki had wedded Ūrmīḷa to Lakshmaṇa in the *Bāla-Kāṇḍa*, he would surely not have made his great hero and heroine heartlessly ignore Ūrmīḷa in the *Ayodhya-Kāṇḍa*. When Rāma described the dangers and miseries of a jungle life, to dissuade Sītā from following him to the Daṇḍakas, Sītā says: ‘ Did my father, the King of the Videhās and Lord of Mithila, imagine you were a woman in man’s image when he gave me to you for wife ? Why do you wish to abandon your devoted wife ? I will follow you even as Sāvitrī of old followed Satyavān. You may not start for the forest without me.’ That this spirited and high-souled Sītā let Lakshmaṇa follow her to the forest without giving a thought to her

own sister Ūrmiḷa, his wife, is just unthinkable.

THE QUADRUPLE WEDDING IN THE BALA-KANDA

The later *Bāla-Kāṇḍa* is wholly dominated by the Supernatural. Sītā-kalyāṇa had to be made a quadruple wedding to harmonise with the miracles attendant on the conception of Rāma and his brothers and the orthodox observance of their sacraments from 'naming' to 'wedding'. Born after *twelve* months' gestation and under three successive precessional stars, the four brothers were virtually of the same age. When their education was nearly complete, Daṣaratha consulted with his priests and relations as to their wedding (*Teshām dāraakriyam prati*). Just then Viṣvāmitra turned up to apply for Rāma's help against Mārīcha (Sarga 18, verses 35-39). In Sarga 20, verse 2, the king says Rāma was under sixteen. At sixteen a Prince completes his education and is due to wed (*Kauṭilya*, Adhi. 1, Prak. 2). When Rāma was wedded at sixteen, his brothers too had to be wedded, three girls had to be improvised, and three weddings tacked on to the Sītā-kalyāṇa.

CHAPTER XVIII

Vālmiki and Women

Did Sītā Insult Lakshmaṇa and Facilitate Her Own Abduction !

It would appear too that Sītā told Lakshmaṇa : ‘ You are a deep villain. Alone you follow Rāma with a hidden motive. You wish to secure me for yourself or Bharata ’ (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 45, verses 23–24). Lakshmaṇa replied, ‘ These unbecoming words are not surprising, coming as they do from a woman. For, this is the nature of women all over this earth, to be fickle, unrighteous, and sharp-tongued, and to part friends ; shame on you who are seeking your own ruin. I will go to Rāma. May you be safe.’ Sītā’s insult and Lakshmaṇa’s libel both appear unnatural. By this time, Lakshmaṇa had slaved for herself and her husband for nearly eleven long years. She and Lakshmaṇa had seen Bharata at Chitrakūt when he came *with Kaikayī* to offer the kingdom to Rāma. Rāma had refused, and Bharata had humiliated himself by soliciting a gift of Rāma’s sandals as Regent of the State in his absence. Bharata was then a boy much under seventeen, and for eleven long years Lakshmaṇa and Bharata had not met.

Sītā was a far-seeing clear-headed Princess and had warned Rāma against the impropriety of a Vaikhānasa penetrating the Daṇḍakas armed with bow and arrows, and attacking Rākshasas 'without cause for offence' (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 9, verses 25, 27 and 28). That in these circumstances Sītā charged Lakshmaṇa with conspiring with Bharata to abduct her is wildly improbable.

Again, Mārīcha was not familiar with Rāma's voice. Again and again, he hid and showed himself alternately, and drew Rāma very far (*sudūram*) from his hermitage (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 44, verse 8). That with Rāma's arrow through his heart, he had the desire, will or power, to imitate Rāma's voice and make himself heard by Sītā is incredible. Even if his voice could carry a *kroṣa* or Goruta (2,000 yards) like a bull's, it is obvious he was too far off for Sītā to hear his 'O Sītā, O Lakshmaṇa'. But the whole story is a big soap-bubble and Sītā herself pricks it in a single verse. When Rāvaṇa sees Sītā alone and enters the hut as an ascetic *atithi* (guest), Sītā says: 'rest awhile, holy Brahman, you can stay in comfort here. My husband will return with plenty (*pushkaḷam*) of forest produce (*vanya*), and great quantities of flesh of deer, ichneumon, and boars killed by him'

(*Aranya*, Sarga 47, verses 22 and 23). If she herself had adjured Rāma to follow and secure alive, if possible, the bright-spotted deer, and had also forced Lakshmaṇa to run to Rāma's help in response to his piteous outcry, she surely would not have told her ascetic guest that Rāma would return with great quantities of roots, fruits and flesh, and assured him he could make himself comfortable. Again, what she told Rāvaṇa in Sarga 47, verse 22, is quite consistent with Sarga 46, verse 37. It was time for the brothers to return, and Sītā, 'then expecting her husband who had gone out hunting (*mrigayā-gatam*) with Lakshmaṇa (*Saha-Lakshmaṇena*), looked out in different directions, but saw only the great green forest, but not Rāma and Lakshmaṇa'. It is clear therefore that Sītā knew Rāma and Lakshmaṇa had both gone out together as usual, to hunt and to gather fruits and roots. They had naturally great appetites, and both would be needed to gather, kill, skin and carry the large quantities of food secured. Lakshmaṇa carried the basket and spade (*khanitra-piṭakā-dharaḥ*) and did all the menial work (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 31, verses 25-27). He followed Rāma and Sītā with the water-pot when they went to the river to bathe (*Āranya*, Sarga 16, verse 3).

On the south bank of the Gangā in the Doab both brothers hunted together and secured four head of game (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 52, verse 102). Again, going a *kroṣa* beyond the sacred Banyan on the south bank of the Yamuna, both of them hunted in the Jumna forest and secured several head of edible deer (*Ayodhya*, Sarga 55, verse 32). On their way to Pañchavaṭī they met Jaṭāyu and the latter says: 'I will help you as a neighbour if you like. This is a trackless forest full of wild beasts and Rākshasas and I will take care of Sītā *when you go out with Lakshmaṇa*' (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 14, verse 23). He was of course referring to their expeditions in search of food, and as promised, he tried his best to save Sītā even at the cost of his life.

Then again, even before Sītā met Rāvaṇa, Rāma had pricked the iridescent bubble in half a verse. *Āraṇya*, Sarga 44, verses 15 and 16 run, 'The mighty arrow pierced Mārīcha's heart like a thunder-bolt. He jumped up the height of a palm and fell down nearly lifeless making a dreadful noise (*vinadan bhairavam nādam*), and dying, he put aside his artificial skin (*kr̥trimām tanum*)'. What follows (verses 17 and 18) is altogether extraordinary. "He then remembered his

words, and *meditated* (*Dadhāyu*) as to how to make Sītā send away Lakshmaṇa, so that Rāvaṇa could easily abduct her. Then knowing his time had come, he imitated Rāma's voice and said 'O Sītā, O Lakshmaṇa'." The forger is evidently muddled.

Rāvaṇa had given clear instructions to the same effect (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 40, verses 19-22), and if Mārīcha 'remembered his words,' there was no need for him to exercise his sinking mind and re-discover Rāvaṇa's bright idea. Then come verses 22-25: "Seeing the Rākshasa blood-sprinkled and rolling in the ground, Rāma thought of Sītā and said to himself: 'This is Mārīcha's device as Lakshmaṇa foretold, and it is Mārīcha I have killed. This Rākshasa died crying out 'O Sītā, O Lakshmaṇa' in a loud tone. How would Sītā feel on hearing it.' Cogitating thus, Rāma's hairs stood on end, and dismay and dejection entered Rāma. That was his state of mind and what does he do? Here comes *Vālmiki's* bomb which explodes all this unnatural concoction. "Having killed the deer-shaped Rākshasa and heard his voice, Rāma killed another spotted deer (*prishatam chānyam*), gathered its flesh, (*māmsam ādāya*) and hastened towards Janasthāna" (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 44, verse 27).

It is clear Rāma followed Mārīcha in the belief he was an ordinary spotted deer to be killed and skinned for food, and not to catch him alive as the rainbow-coloured bejewelled marvel of a deer (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 42, verses 25-29), that fooled and fascinated Sītā. Sītā's verse 22 in *Āraṇya*, Sarga 47 and verse 27 of *Āraṇya*, Sarga 44, show conclusively that nearly two hundred verses have been interpolated, making up most of Chapters 42-46 and, discrediting Vālmīki, Sītā, Lakshmaṇa and Rāma.

The fact was, Mārīcha never forgot the wound inflicted by Rāma when he attacked Viṣvāmitra's sacrificial platform. That too was in the Daṇḍakas, and when Rāma returned to the Daṇḍakas as an exile with matted hair and in barks, Mārīcha thought he was an unarmed, ill-nourished low-down ascetic, and rushed towards him to *avenge his former injury* (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 39, verses 8 and 9). He had two Rākshasa friends with him and *all were camouflaged in deer-skins*. It would appear that to go on fours covered by a deer skin was the favourite device of Mārīcha to approach unsuspecting hermits and pounce upon them to satisfy his intense Rākshasa (*Pisitaṣana*) craving for flesh. Rāma however took up his bow and shot three arrows at

Mārīcha and his companions. The latter were killed, but Mārīcha jumped up and his remarkable agility saved him (*Āraṇya*, Sarga 39, verses 2, 9, 10 and 12). He was familiar with the hunting grounds of the Rāghava brothers. He had a grudge (*Pūrva-vaira*) against Rāma. In attacking Viṣvāmitra too, he acted under Rāvaṇa's orders (*Bāla-Kāṇḍa*, Sarga 20, verse 20). He was active and strong, and an expert at hiding in thickets and moving like a deer covered by a deer skin. It was natural for Rāvaṇa to seek his help, and natural for Mārīcha to readily agree.

CHAPTER XIX

Miraculous Origin of the *Rāmāyaṇa* How Vālmīki's *Ṣōka* became a *Ślōka*

THE *Rāmāyaṇa* as we have it begins with Nārada's answer to Vālmīki's question : ' Who is the best and greatest of contemporary men ? ' (Sarga 1, verses 1-5). Nārada answers it was Rāma, and gives an abstract of Rāma's life from his exile to the Daṇḍakas to his coronation as king in Ayodhya. Nārada then predicts, that Rāma would perform *hundreds* of horse-sacrifices, rule eleven thousand years, and pass on to the world of *Brahma* (verses 8-96).

In Sarga 2, the origin of the *Rāmāyaṇa* as a *kāvya* is traced to Vālmīki's pity for a wild goose that was shot dead by a hunter and mourned by his mate. He involuntarily cursed the hunter in the famous verse *Mānishāda*, etc. He felt surprised and elated and told his disciple : ' Let these words made up of regular feet and musical as a lute-wire, and born of my *ṣoka* (anguish) be a *ślōka*, not otherwise.' The disciple reverently said, ' so be it,' and the *muni* was pleased (verses 14-18). When he came home, the four-faced Creator turned up to see the *muni* and said :

“Have no doubt it *is* a *śloka* you have constructed, and it is by my own will, this Sarasvatī has issued out of you. . . . Work up the full story of Rāma that Nārada told you into a *kāvya* of pleasing *ślokas*” (verses 30, 31 and 35). This verse ‘*Mānishāda*’ is in *Anushtub* metre known to the Vedic Mantras as well as the Brāhmaṇas. Atri and Kaṇva are the most ancient of the Vedic chanters. Both use the *Anushtub*. *Anushtub* is the Turiya (fourth) Brahman, Gāyatrī, Trishṭup and Jagati being the first three. It is with the help of the *Anushtub* that Atri discovered the darkened Sun (*vide* Maṇḍala 5, Hymn 40, verse 6). The two sacred verses dealing with the blackening of the Sun by Svarbhānu and the restoration of his light by the Atris (Hymn 40, verses 5 and 9) are appropriately in the *Anushtub* metre. The word *śloka* too, occurs in the Vedic Mantras though not specifically applied to the *Anushtub*. In the Brāhmaṇas however *Anushtub* is again and again called a *śloka*. In the eighth and ninth *Kāṇḍas* of Adhyāya 39 of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, we have a good number of *ślokas* in *Anushtub* metre quite as regular and musical as Vālmīki’s *Mānishāda* verse. What is more, these verses are introduced in the text itself by the words ‘In this connexion, these *ślokas* are sung

(*Ṣlokā Abhi Gītāḥ*)'. But it would appear Vālmīki was astonished by his metrical outburst, called it a *ṣloka* as it issued involuntarily out of his *ṣoka*, that Brahma assured him it *was* a *ṣloka*, and that *He* sent *His* muse which inspired Vālmīki's tongue. Now all this is obviously rank bunkum.

CHAPTER XX

The So-called *Gāyatrī-Rāmāyaṇa*

I LEARNT for the first time about three years ago from the correspondence columns of the “*Hindu*”, that there is a so-called *Gāyatrī-Rāmāyaṇa* of twenty-four thousand *ślokas* each letter of the *Gāyatrī-mantra* being a *Bijākshara* giving rise to a thousand *ślokas*. I have studied the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* with some care, and my conclusion is that the idea that the *Rāmāyaṇa* was reared on the *Gāyatrī* as its foundation is at best a fantastic conceit.

‘ GAYATRI-RAMAYANA ’ Vs. ELEMENTARY ARITHMETIC

In the first place, the *Gāyatrī* of the *Sāvitṛī* contains only 23 letters. At a thousand letter, the total of verses can be only twenty-three thousand. In the Mantras the *Gāyatrī* is always of three *Pādās* (feet), but the feet are often elliptical. The *Sāvitṛī Rik* is the tenth verse of Hymn 62 of the third Maṇḍala. The first *Pāda* has only seven letters. In verse 4 of the same hymn, it is the second foot that has only seven letters. In verse 5 it is the third foot that lacks a letter. In *Rik* 6 all three feet are elliptical; with seven

letters to each foot. In Riks 7, 8 and 9 all three feet are perfect, having 8 letters each. I need hardly say the 'Om' was prefixed to the Mantras in the Brāhmaṇa period, as the Ekākshara Brahman, *Udgītha*, or 'Anugñākshara' (meaning 'yes'), and is not part of the Rik itself. The essence of the *Upanayana* is the imparting of the 'Sāvitrī'. The boy says 'Sāvitrīm bho anubrūhi'. The Guru responds 'yes' (*Omiti*) and recites the Rik *Pāda* by *Pāda*, the first *pāda* being *Tatsaritur Vareṇyam* which has only seven letters (*Bodhāyana-Grihya Sutra*, Praṣ. 2, Adhyāya 5, Sūtras 39 and 40). In Sūtra 9 of Pr. 1, Kh. 13 of his *Dharma-Sūtras*, Apastamba explains the word *Upanayanam*, and says in his next (10th) Sūtra: "The Brāhmaṇa says, 'the Sāvitrī is taught in all the Vedas'." Even in the later *Manu-smṛti*, what is now called 'Gāyatrī' is the Sāvitrī (*vide* Adhyāya 2, verses 38, 39 and 77). In verse 77 Manu says: "Pārameshṭhi-Prajāpati, milked out this *Sāvitrī* Rik beginning 'Tat' foot by foot, out of the three Vedas." So too was 'Om' with the three *Vyāhrtis* from the three *Vedas* (verse 76) and verse 78 treats the 'akshara' and the 'vyāhrtis' as distinct from the Rik.

It is not clear when and where the Sāvitrī began to be called the Gāyatrī, though there

are thousands of Mantras in the *Gāyatrī Chchandās*. It must have been in the days of Brahman decadence when we grew indifferent to the letter as well as the spirit of the Riks and so far back as the second century B.C. Patañjali quotes from a hymn to the Aṣvins and says : ' Many, surely are the words whose meanings are not known ' (*Mahābhāshya*, Adh. II, Pāda I, Ahn. I). It is no wonder the Paṇḍit who conceived the ingenious idea of treating the *Rāmāyaṇa* as an expansion and exposition of Viṣvāmitra's prayer to the Divine Will as the inspiring light of the Universe, overlooked the fact that the *Gāyatrī* in which the *Sāvitrī* is clothed has only twenty-three letters. Again, when Brahma appeared before Vālmīki in his Āśrama, the *Muni's* *śoka* for the bereaved Kraunchi, persisted, and he intoned the *śloka* '*Mā-nishāda*', etc. Brahma smiled and told him : ' You have put together a *śloka*, and there is no doubt about it. This Sarasvatī has issued out of you by my desire. Make up Rāma's story woven into pleasing '*ślokas*'. This idea then occurred to Vālmīki : ' I will make up the *entire Rāmāyaṇa Kāvya* of *ślokas* like this ' (*Bāla-Kāṇḍa*, Sarga 2, verses 23-41). Verse 42 that follows states that the famous *muni* produced the epic of hundreds of *ślokas*

with an equal number of letters (*samāksharaiḥ*). There is no reference in all this to the Sāvitrī. All the enthusiasm is for the Anusṭup *śloka*. Again, it is to be expected from what Brahma says and Vālmiki decides, that the *Rāmāyaṇa* will contain only Anusṭup *ślokas* (*vide* Sarga 2, verses 30, 32 and 41). A good number of verses and sometimes whole Sargas are in a different metre. Further it is assumed that the number of verses (24,000), is the sole test of the origin and contents of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Even omitting the fact that many verses are not *ślokas* like the '*Mānishāda*' etc., Sarga 4, verse 2, says : ' The Ṛshi gave out twenty-four thousand *ślokas*, so too (*tatha*) five hundred Sargas, and six *Kāṇḍas* as well as the *Uttara*. In the *Uttara* too (Sarga 94, verses 25 and 26), Kuṣa and Lava repeat the above facts and figures. Evidently it is the 'twenty-four thousand *ślokas*' of the above verse that suggested the twenty-four letters of the *normal* Gāyatrī metre as the seed-letters of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The author of the idea was apparently accustomed to the loose modern user of the word Gāyatrī for Sāvitrī, and overlooked the fact that the Gāyatrī of the Sāvitrī contained only twenty-three letters. The supposed connexion obsessed the author and without more ado he called Vālmiki's epic

the *Gāyatrī-Rāmāyaṇa*, over-looking the 'Sarga-ṣaṭān pañcha' next to the 'twenty-four thousand ślokaś' in Sarga 4, verse 2. I have not counted the verses in the *Rāmāyaṇa* like Dewan Bahadur Mr. K. S. R. Sāstri but I will take it that the number is near about 24,000. The Sargas, however, total 646, a number substantially (29 per cent.) larger than 500, and cannot therefore be reconciled with verse 2 of Sarga 4.

For the above reasons, there can be no doubt that the so-called *Gāyatrī-Rāmāyaṇa* is a contemptible forgery.

ERRATA

Page xlii, line 13—*substitute* “72” for “66”.

Page xlvi, line 20—*Insert* “comma” after
“standing” and *omit*
“comma” after “and”.

Page xlvii, line 6—*Read* “examination” for
“investigation”.

Page 7, line 20—*Read* “Durvāsa” for
“Dūrvāsa”.

Page 69, line 20—*Read* “Tāra” for “Tārā”.

